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PERIODICAL  
READING ROOM

SIDNEY PETERSON:  
AN HISTORICAL  
NOTE ON THE  
FAR-OUT WEST

ANN HALPRIN  
PHOTOGRAPH BY  
WARNER JEPSON

# KJAZ

FM at 93

In San Francisco its



Bruce N. Smith



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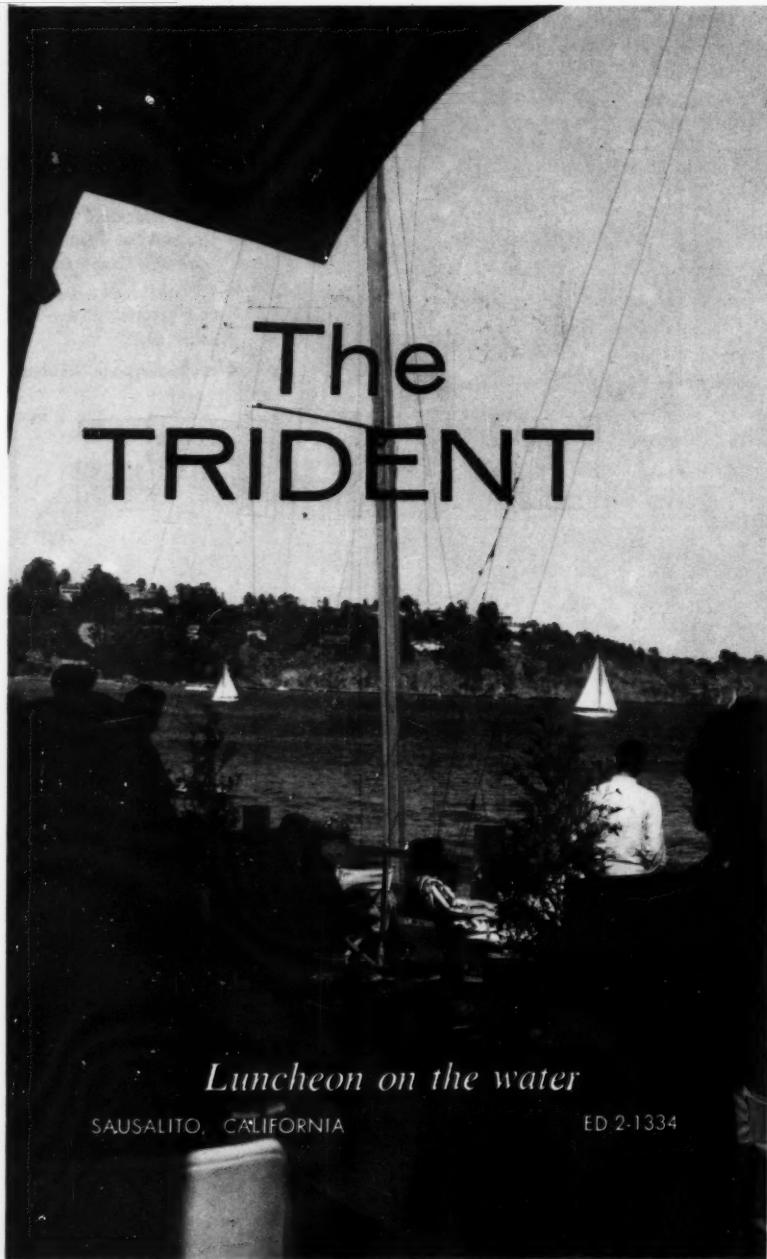
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## contact LETTERS

### Editors:

November, 1959, I walked the streets of downtown Des Moines from 10:00 to 12:30 on the sixth night of a seven-day road trip for the Iowa State Highway Commission Maintenance Research Project. Sometimes I stopped for a beer, but mostly I walked; I found a bookstore, open late but closing. Because I needed company that night in Des Moines, I took a quick choice and the first book on the first rack nearest the street leered in the dim light of the store—CONTACT 3.

In Cedar Rapids and at Coe College there are pretty freshmen girls, jolly jocks, Marvin Cone, lots of churches and old ladies, new high schools, old farmers, new industry, old homes, Ed Whiting, John Murray, and my mother. So I shared this book with four people.

Bob Bradley was State and Midwest chess champion. One night we sat in the country and drank much stout which burned brightly at dawn's early light. He married my wife's best friend and moved to San Francisco in 1960. This summer he is running a crap table at Harrah's in Reno. He liked the book.

Jim Rogers liked the book too. He went to Luxemburg early in 1960 to stay with his 1958 foreign student, Frank Schuller. He missed Camus by a couple of months and a tree and hasn't been the same since he came back.

Steve Robinson did too. He got married, grew a moustache, and started going to church every week. He was my oldest friend and a good drinker. He borrowed an Air Force uniform when we were both sixteen. We went to a little Syrian grocery store and Steve said he was home on leave and wanted some beer. After that he bought our beer there all the time until we were eighteen and learned how to make fake I.D.'s out of our drivers' licenses. He was so famous that one night two guys we had never seen before and who went to one of the Catholic schools came over to his house and asked him to buy them beer.

I named my second son Steve. We haven't written since May, 1960. My third week in California, I called him long distance from San Diego and told him he was a church prostitute. But he liked the book. Anyway, I didn't change my son's name and he is two now. My son.

The fourth person I showed the book to in 1959 was my brother. He is younger but he was seventeen at that time. Since then, he has had his first love-filled, sour-ending love affair and had his first try at college. He was frightened by a group of college intellectuals and nauseated at the fraternity gatherings. I warned him. He came to visit us in March 1961 where we lived in Burbank. He said he was going to hide out in the Army for a while, learn to be brave and subservient, and then try college again when he gets out. That kid has guts. We never did get around to discussing the book, and he is at Fort Ord now.

Also in November, 1959, I hailed the opening of Renaissance II in Iowa City. In December the Iowa State Highway Commission Maintenance Research Project in Conjunction With the Federal Bureau of Public Roads and I had an argument. I lost. So, in December, I had plenty of time for Renaissance II. There were many serious people there, but mostly beat types and, even worse, pseudo-beats and girls in leotards who, it was rumored, would sit in their apartments in leotards and bras and read poetry with you. For sex I still prefer the pretty freshmen girls. Anyway, Renaissance II was over a bookstore, and in December I took them my CONTACT 3 and asked if they were going to carry it because I'd be damned if I'd drive all the way to Des Moines every four months to get one and Cedar Rapids wouldn't have it until the Women's League approved it. This beard was indignant because Paul Engle and his family had been wronged by a criminal so I left him and the bookstore, and four months later I came to San Diego. Anyway, at the time I thought it would be a good idea to subscribe to CONTACT so I did. I got issues 1, 2, 3, and 4. The extra 3 I gave to my brother.

So I haven't seen an issue since CONTACT 4—February 1960. I don't even know if you exist any more. I've been in California for over a year in April—one month in San Diego, five in L.A., four in Burbank, and nearly three in Costa Mesa—and nowhere a CONTACT. Why didn't I renew my subscription? Because I still owe you \$5.00 for the first four issues. I shouldn't have argued with the Iowa State Highway Commission. But I wanted to come west anyway. I'd been south to the Gulf, and north to Canada, and east to the ocean, but no further west than Omaha. So here I am and where are you? Come out from hiding. I'm not mad. I liked the book too. I'll even send you the \$5.00. In fact, I'll buy all the issues I missed and even re-subscribe!

How's that? Maybe I'll even send an unsolicited manuscript accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Well? Are you there, CONTACT? Over?

M. Forrest Duncan  
Costa Mesa, California

Editors:

It has been a long time since I read anything as sensible and refreshing as Jonathan Williams' "Is Pamela McFram Gleese America's Greatest Poet?" in the recent CONTACT. That *Time* article was, as you say, an obscenity. It is the smug *knowingness* of those people that so exasperates—they have it all tied up so neatly. I felt especially boxed in by that thing because I happened to agree, more or less, with their list. It's infuriating to have your own

opinions cheapened and somehow invalidated by their ignorant judgments.

But to me the most important of his remarks were those to the effect that there is no war among poets. I write poems and they get printed now and again, but somehow I don't know many poets and so I had begun to imagine that I was almost the only person in on that particular secret. Once at Columbia, when Kenneth Koch and I were asked to read as representatives of supposedly enemy camps, we surprised this knowledge in one another, to our mutual amusement and gratification. I hope your piece will begin to make it publicly clear again that the point is simply to write good poems in whatever voice is your own and to recognize a good poem when you find it.

John N. Morris  
San Francisco, California

Editor:

My first (and final) reaction to Henry Miller's mystical rave of appreciation for Nash's artful art is only this:

Perplexing  
All that muscle  
Flexing  
To split  
A toothpick.

Ed Stone  
Lucas Valley, California

1 June 1962

Dear Mr. Wintersteen,

The copy of CONTACT for June has just arrived, and I have read it. It implies a terrific difference of viewpoint between us, in spite of the little valentine to me of an allusion to the book-title I used, by an old friend, Clellon Holmes (who was m.c. at the signing-party for the 1st edition in a New York bookstore). I think I had better write this hurried p.s. to my preceding note, to make sure we are not both wasting our time.

The article I am writing, as a supplement to *Love & Death* is a 100% head-down attack on modern so-called art, beatnik intellectual pose, and the cult-of-death and sadism, of which one of the most outrageous examples I have ever seen (I mean, ever...) is your pictorial article "June Bride" in the current issue of CONTACT, in which it seems desirable to print a picture of drawing pins being stuck into a woman's eye. (Of course, it's only a dummy, but of which of us couldn't that be said?) This is the rottenest thing that has ever been printed in a periodical publication in the U.S. in the three hundred years they have been printing in those states, and I do not believe

it can be matched even in the most repulsive pictorial witticisms of the last twenty years of comic books, and the flaj-guck secret publications of the Nutrix Corp. Which the hell side are you on, and, if that's the side you are on, why are we kidding each other along? I mean this sincerely. There isn't enough money in the world to make me help with an enterprise of this sort, in spite of the perhaps amusing contradiction of running a frontal assault—not in *Scientific American*, but—in the very magazine which makes itself a mouthpiece for the intellectual and artistic disorganization and end-of-the-rope that I am opposed to. (The illustrations to the Kay Boyle article seem to me only the routine crap, for instance, but are typical of the whole swindle which modern art plainly is, and over which the "artists" fall into laughing-jags in the privacy of their business-offices...oops, "studios"...in Paris when the tourist season is over.) Not to put too fine a point to it, I simply cannot make out what you want with me, if you are for printing pins-in-women's-eyes...and other intellectual naziism of that type. (Make room for Gedeion's "Mechanization takes command" item of same with razor-blade for next issue?) I do not aim to see what I have to say printed side-by-side—by any elaborate accident—with stuff of this kind. Your "*New*" writing, art, and ideas, seem to me precisely identical with the "*Old*" ones of Marinetti, Apollinaire, and the rest of the dadaist-surrealist FALSE REVOLT that led directly to Hitler (who learned it at Marinetti's knee, along with Apollinaire). I am not trying to be offensive, or to get out of a contract which, in any case, I don't have. I am simply staggered by this unnecessary whiff of precisely this degeneracy—under the banner of neo-intellectuality—arising precisely from the organ where I imagined my criticism of it was to be printed.

Yours to that extent.  
G. Legman  
Valbonne, France

Editors' note: *G. Legman is the author of Love & Death, a controversial series of essays first published in 1949 and now out of print. Contact Editions intends to bring out an enlarged version in 1963. Legman's mention of John Clellon Holmes refers to his story, "A Few Loves, A Few Deaths" (Contact/June).*

Editors, Contact Editions:

The difficulty of finding a publisher for a book such as this, did not occur to me when I set myself to writing it. To my frankly prejudiced mind, it was and is an exciting book, timely and provocative, profound and yet written in the vernacular. And while I lay no claim to the style of a Dickens or a Carlyle, it is completely readable.

Of course I am well aware that the book does have its snide side; not deliberately, nor premeditatedly, but naïvely and unavoidably, which only makes the satire more biting, the wallop to sensitive hides the more likely

to draw blood. I had a personal friend, a philosophy professor, junior member of the faculty at Harvard University. I sent the book to him, hot from the typist. He read and criticised it about a third way through and then sent it back to me with a scathing letter, to the effect that, after all, he is just one of those prolix and hypocritical professors whom I eschew—not at all like him. A box of Christmas cookies to him and his family was not even acknowledged. Three letters since have not been answered. He evidently is very much disturbed.

So it is a disturbing book. I did not intend it as such, but I am not sorry.

It is also a daring book. And I am prepared to defend it. As I did to my friend at Harvard, for as far as he went with his questioning. I suspect that one reason he has not answered my three letters, is that he was unable to answer my first one; I do know what I am talking about when I dare to challenge accepted things, and I guess he hoped that I didn't know and could not support my statements.

A second book is already in the works, and a third.

I understand that you fellows are in business to put out those works which have intrinsic worth, but which others shy away for reasons never specified.

Thank you. And may this be the beginning of a long and lively association. Perhaps this year, you boys may get the Christmas cookies. I bake them myself, you know; and to my frankly prejudiced mind, they are most delicious and wholesome.

XXXXXX  
Somewhere in New Jersey

Editor:

Re: Invoice 2364 — 6/7/62

Please cancel the above subscription.

The person who sent it in is mentally incompetent and under psychiatric care.

XXXXXX  
Somewhere in New Jersey

June 18, 1962

Dear Evan,

I don't know what to say about the new CONTACT. I bought my copy at the newsstand of a misanthrope who does business at Broadway and 74th Street. He is a man who sneers and curses at people who, as I do, stand and look at newspaper headlines and thumb magazines before (or without) buying. I stood there before his green kiosk last week looking for the name of a woman editor I met recently who edits *Confidential Confessions*—looking, I mean, on the masthead of that magazine—when something (it was CONTACT) caught my eye. I had had no intention to buy *Confidential Confessions*; I only wanted to find Mary Vasiliades' name. And I couldn't afford to tarry long because the proprietor, having seen me several times before, was primed, so to say, or cocked, (flip to 94)

# contact WEST SIDNEY PETERSON

## AN HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE FAR-OUT WEST

In the beginning there was a sandspit and life crawled out of the sea, some of it having made the trip around the Horn. The flotsam and jetsam of the scrimshaw mementos of such voyages still rest atop occasional antique pianos, flanked by dried silverdollar plants and the stuffed heads of once-savage Alaskan brown bears left over from another gold rush, that of the Klondike, in the tiny front parlors of occasional surviving R.R. flats. Taxidermy, that once thriving art, has long since become a mere part of the voodoo trade in bat blood and hippopotamus hair: *The miners came in '49./The whores in '51...* but twenty more years were to pass before the arrival of the first chefs. Thus the Golden Age came and went without the benefit of that gastronomy for which the city was subsequently so famous. Actually, these chefs belonged to the second wave of French migrants, the first having abruptly receded to its homeland, where its return was immortalized by Daumier in a magnificent drawing of a returning prodigal. The third wave, consisting of merchants and laundrymen, left rather later.

If Offenbach had elected to remain in America, there seems small likelihood that he would not have gravitated to the West Coast. There was something magnificently Offenbachian about both the time and the place. While the average miner was still making himself two dollars a day standing in ice water up to his middle, the gods and goddesses of the jigsaw Olympus beside the Golden Gate were living off the fat of each other, creating an atmosphere of urban naughtiness that made San Francisco an outpost of the Second Empire, a provincial capital not only of the several kinds of commerce but of that spirit of *blague* which, in the place of its origin, finally exploded into the fireworks of modern art. Unhappily, in the absence of another Wiener, the burlesque amours of the daughters of the first families of the Far West with the first SP conductors have gone unsung and the whole anti-Wagnerian movement lost an opportunity which will not soon recur. The mock heroes and heroines of a generation of random fathers and unwed mothers, of founding parents producing epigones foundlings went

undebunked; and the spirit of mockery, so conspicuous in the time of their youth, became a mere smoldering ember in the morass of an impoverished Bohemian tradition which was probably the most Franciscan thing about life in the city of St. Francis.

In the Seventies, existence was not only desperate but serious. The railroad had brought in chefs and a depression. It now emptied the city of most of its literary and artistic talent. The world shrank a little. It was only seven days to New York and another week or so to Rome, London, and Paris. The frontiersmen of letters

took off with scarcely a tear, leaving behind them an oasis of spiritualism and single tax, of rampant commercial and political amorality, alcoholic malaise, and the highest suicide rate in the land. If some of them returned, it was not because they wished to. But whether they stayed away or came back, their ghosts haunted the town. Possibly it was no accident that the Sixties had been a period of passionate concern with spiritualism. The way to the Seventies had been prepared. Occasionally it was even prepared by the same hand as when Henry George began his career with a series of articles on premonitions, the mysterious behavior of corpses, and other aspects of the supernatural.

I suppose it means something

that the two favorite steel engravings of the period were both Biblical scenes: *The Return of the Prodigal Son* and *The Feast of Belshazzar*. To the tunes of *Poor Whippoorwill*, *The Stub-Toe Polka* and *The Maiden's Prayer*, the city was on its way to becoming what Oscar Lewis—in his charming account of “the brilliant Artistic World of Gaslit San Francisco,” *Bay Window Bohemia*—calls “the West’s leading citadel of culture.”

Culture is not, of course, creation and our views of both have changed somewhat in the last half a century. The Bohemian tradition remains an important part of the local story but I suspect that its true importance is not to be discovered in the novels of Frank Norris, Jack London, or Gertrude Atherton; the landscapes of William Keith, or the lyrics of George Sterling—now almost as faded as the forgotten diaries of the lady poets who preceded him—but, rather, in a more vulgar branch of that



first there were  
 night people  
 now it's...  
**no~people**  
 and they speak  
**no~language.**  
 they meet in the  
**no~capitol**  
 of the **WORLD.**  
 the bar  
 with  
**no~name**  
 •  
 no-sausalito, california



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tradition and in the field of a more primitive medium than either painting or writing; not basket-making—but dance.

In its relation to the contemporary scene it seems to me that the invention of the turkey trot, the bunny hug and the Texas Tommy in a rose-lit district now given over to decorators, attorneys-at-law, and expense-account steak houses, has more significance than all the works of all the socially aware disciples of local color (one must beware of it, constantly, Van Gogh said) from Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* to the latest account of the suburban bog by some Zola of a creative writing seminar trying to combine the insights of the Marquis de Sade with the innocence of William Saroyan.

The turkey trot, the bunny hug and the Texas Tommy (or tummy; cute for *danse du ventre* or belly dance—the very antithesis of ballet) represent the Offenbachanalian *esprit* at the level to which it had sunk by the turn of the century. They were one manifestation of a kind of thing that found another expression in the astounding career of Isadora Duncan, a local girl who was teaching neighborhood babies to move their arms when she was less than six. Isadora had more sense of *blague*, of dedication and disengagement, in the little finger of her left hand than all the members of the Bohemian Club in all their members from the day of its founding in 1872 until now.

From these early examples of Offenbachanalian revolt (revolutionary significance in the lifting of a leg) we may draw certain conclusions. One: the creative spirit of a city with the highest suicide rate in the land found a natural and even inevitable expression through a medium which has always and everywhere flourished with the need for a rising birth rate (one thinks of the thousand dance halls open night and day through the time of the Terror). Two: whereas in Paris, the *world* center, the historic affinity between low living and high feeling was responsible for an efflorescence of erotic works ranging from the pornography of Nadar to the tender brutality of Degas and Lautrec, producing an æsthetic sanction for that *nostalgie de la boue* which so characterized a generation that looked to the brothel for its inspiration, discovering a subject that had—as George Moore once said—been neglected by poets since Villon wrote his *La Grosse Margot*; in San Francisco, the provincial citadel, full of cribs and parlor houses, a genteel overlay kept the creative ferment at the disreputable level of choreographic coupling except, of course, in the case of Isadora whose genius was of a special order, enabling her, almost alone in her time and place, to discover *herself* as a subject and thus anticipate a period in which only that art would be bad which was like the good or bad art of someone else. Like the celebrated Adah Isaacs Menken—whom she recalled in certain respects—la Duncan left for Europe as soon as she could manage, heading not for London but for Paris where, unlike that other trail blazer from the West—the Barnum of local poets, Joaquin Miller—she pursued not pink countesses but Red poets and plunged gracefully out of the Nineteenth into the Twentieth century.

While Isadora was still doing things with the neighborhood babies, another phenomenon across the bay was busy swallowing the English language and experiencing the agony of adolescence while preparing herself to indite the most remarkable book ever to be incubated (even partly) in Oakland, California—*The Making of Americans*.

The year was 1906. By this time Gertrude Stein, too, had moved to Paris and was ready to start writing her “history of a family’s progress.” So she did, commencing, “Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. ‘Stop!’ cried the groaning old man at last. ‘Stop! I did not drag my father beyond this tree.’”

Only sixty-six years had passed since Dana had commenced his *Two Years Before the Mast* with: “The fourteenth of August was the day fixed upon for the sailing of the brig *Pilgrim* on her voyage from Boston round Cape Horn to the western coast of North America.”

So Gertrude Stein was writing in Paris and about to have her portrait

painted by Picasso, and Caruso was at the St. Francis, and it was the one hundred and thirty-first anniversary of the ride of Paul Revere, on the eighteenth of April and—in the words of Charles K. Field:

...God spanked the town  
For being over-frisky...

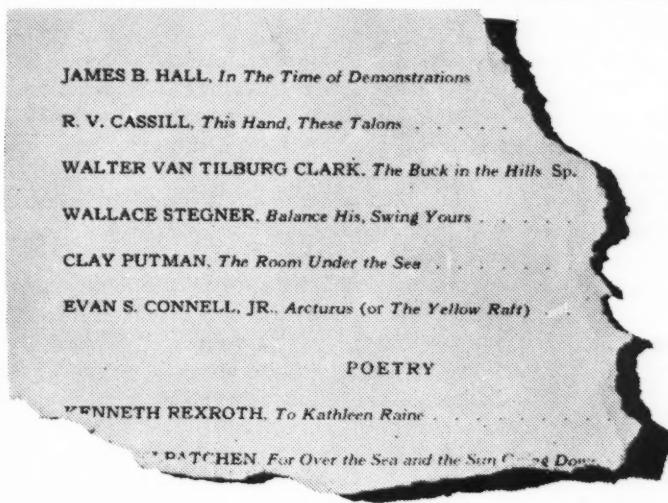
There is no need at this late date to dwell upon the apocalyptic significance of fires. All authorities are agreed that something ended and something else began in 1906. In a larger sense, they are undoubtedly right. It is my own feeling that 1906 lasted until the end of 1915 and that, if we are looking for symbols, a better one than the heroism and building mania of the stricken populace was the response of the same populace to a living, breathing facsimile of a female nude on the last night of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the pitchman's cry "Come kiss Stella goodbye!" It is an ironic comment on this end of an epoch that for every one who went upstairs to gaze in awe at a scale model of the Panama Canal, hundreds stayed below to take a final nostalgic look at Stella. It was a little as though the first chapter of *Nana* had been combined with the last. The war in Europe was already in its second year.

I don't think there was anything very special about San Francisco in the Twenties. It simply went on a prolonged spree with the rest of the country. There was more wine and less beer. The town that had once been described as "a little of Paris, of Rome, of Pekin," was still a little of all three but it was also somewhat more than a little of St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Ft. Worth, Texas. To do full justice to the period would, I think, require the relaxed eloquence of another Whitman. Telegraph Hill was crowded with people looking for a drink. The *Little Review* was read religiously in tiny apartments up and down Bush Street, along with copies of *Broom*, *The Dial*, *The Liberator* and *The Freeman*. Art students who, a generation later, would have been following in the footsteps of Still and Corbett were under the influence of Frank Brangwyn whose fruity mur-

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als had been a sensation at the P.P.I.E. In the high-ceilinged cubicles of Montgomery Block, the thirst for literature was slaked with the masterpieces of Dreiser and Hecht. For the very young, the oilcloth smell of letters emanated from the bindings of The Modern Library. An exhibition of contemporary French masters at the Civic Auditorium in 1923 had a bewildering success. If I remember correctly, the socio-artistic high point of the decade was achieved with a lecture by Elie Faure at the Legion of Honor at which everyone spoke either French or with an accent.

The Thirties were simply more Americana in a town with a tradition of concern with the progress of poverty that had its roots back in the hungry Seventies. The ghosts of Henry George and Jack London fraternized with the shades of Marx, Engels, and the late John Reed. A kind of secular Franciscanism inspired the brotherhood of the W.P.A. The Mexican revolution crept north, wall by wall, producing transient revulsions such as the Patronize-the-Local-Artist-of-Your-Choice movement headed by diehard Bohemians whose patronage was threatened by the appearance of foreign masters and whose ire recalled the indignation of the Irish drayman and orator of the Seventies, Dennis Kearney, whose Cato-like command "the Chinese must go!", is known to every California schoolboy. Such burstings of isolationist sentiment were understandable, if not very popular. The world was still shrinking and there were many to whom the Spanish War seemed closer than the wolf at an occasional door. And as a matter of fact it was. A generation that had begun with nothing more important on its mind than the problem of how to find a speakeasy, ended with a headlong flight into the shipyards. All right, it *was* more complicated than that. It always is. The point is not how complex things *are* but what happens afterwards. We are still struggling with the consequences of that precipitate action of the morning of the sixth of August, 1945, or, if you prefer the reformed calendar of the Brave New World, 2 B.F.

It is difficult to respond to anything as stupendous as the birth of a new age with anything like equanimity and it is possible that the only people really qualified at the time to react to Hiroshima were those institution cases for whom a concern with astral phenomena is a mask for schizophrenic homosexuality. All three have been epidemic since 2 B.F. A vast numbness characterized the world of art and letters which had been caught, in a sense, with its ideologies outworn. Aside from the overwhelming question of the survival of the human race, which was something new, it was really the old crisis of the machine—the mass and the individual—warmed over. Automation, social discipline, and freedom had, as it were, become the conditions for survival. As I say, there was this numbness and one looked about the world in vain for those signs of a returning creative sensibility which normally follow prolonged intervals of mutual slaughter. In a liberated Paris, the traditional center of ferment, the half-forgotten doctrines of an obscure Danish theologian were revived and revised to rationalize a

new dogma of the need for despair. Life was serious and earnest, and a suitable gravity was its goal. Even the much-touted absurd was a matter not for laughter, but nausea. In America, too, the prevailing mood was grey. The problems were too great. People turned to their private miseries and those of Tennessee Williams. Except in San Francisco. In this fragment of the world, there was a ferment. It was the worst town in the land in which to sell a picture (except Buffalo, New York) but it had retained its sensibility and that indispensable ingredient for the creation of works of art—gaiety.

I am not referring to the creation of masterpieces but to creativity in general. You only have to remember some of the things that came out of San Francisco and out of no other place in the years immediately following the great debacle: A school of painting that has been a world influence; a spate of experimental film anticipating important current developments by half a generation. It began with painting and film. The so-called sick comics were first sick here. Writing poetry became almost a municipal endeavor. Why? So the town is stimulating. It is an authentic "story city" and Khrushchev seems to like it. But there are other stimulating towns around; stories no longer have to be written about particular places, and who knows about Khrushchev? The country is sliding West. My own feeling is that there was, in 1945, a mood of disengagement, so to say, which made possible a certain kind of laughter, having its origin in an indomitable sense of *blague* dating back to the mining-camp days. Obviously the young men of the Eighteen Fifties and Sixties had it. Isadora had it. Saroyan had it, still has it. Ginsberg has it. I think Ann Halprin has it along with the others whose production of *The 5 Legged Stool* has recently delighted some and outraged others. Yes, *The 5 Legged Stool* is a legitimately Franciscan piece, nine parts *blague* and one part genius. The level of skill is high, the taste impeccable and, as one critic has pointed out, where else can you see a tense dance-drama in which a whole act is devoted to putting down and picking up 45 empty bottles?

The figure has returned to West Coast painting and the editors of *Life*, our most widely circulated art journal—have remarked the prevalence of a mood of disengagement in local studios, particularly, it seems, from particular faces. Anonymity has taken over with a technique involving massive obliterations of detail as in the generalizations of David Park, or the enigmas of Elmer Bischoff who substitutes broadly painted nudes for the common pictorial idiocy of zoomorphic foothills in landscapes as solid and compact as the apples of Cezanne, or for the formulae with which the mad scientists still plot an end to it all. We are told in no uncertain terms that things are now different on the East Coast where painters are turning away from the abstract to embrace the simple joys of limning their own wives, children, and property thus expressing a concern with the concrete, the specific, the *particular* and, yes, the domestic and the social, the outwardgoing and the gregarious.

"East is East and West is West and the Twain meet

only on the common ground of recognizable subjects."

I am impressed: but not so much by the Kiplingesque form of this revised axiom as by the sly paronomastic allusion to one whose stay here, although brief, was rather longer than the few days endured by the unhappy Rudyard passing through on his way home from colonial India. There have been greater authorities on the California scene than Mark Twain but none more sensitive, in print anyway, to what may be called its bathos.

"All scenery in California requires *distance* to give it its highest charm," he wrote, citing, among other things, the vindictiveness of the local grass which, upon close inspection, stands "unsocially wide apart, with uncomely spots of barren sand between (the blades)." He saw the Englishman's "mad city, inhabited by perfectly insane people whose women are of a remarkable beauty" as "stately and handsome at a fair distance but close at hand

one notes that the architecture is mostly old-fashioned, many streets are made up of decaying, smoke-grimed, wooden houses etc."

What Twain did, I think, with these few simple observations, was to provide us with a clue to the real nature of the Franciscan mood of disengagement—past, present, and future. Merely by being here all sorts of people who may or may not have been philosophically hyperoptic have had, as it were, the condition thrust upon them. Their vision has been structured by views as foreign to most other parts of the world as redwoods, say, would be to the wilds of Vermont. The changes have been enormous but our landscape still contradicts itself with an *optique* that keeps us at a certain remove. In this somewhat humorless and confused year of 15 A.F., it may be an *optique* to keep in mind.



Photos from Ann Halpin's "The Five Legged Stool" by Warner Jepson



Seated, l. to r.: Bennett Cerf, Faith Baldwin, Bergen Evans, Bruce Catton, Mignon G. Eberhart, John Caples, J. D. Ratcliff  
Standing: Mark Wiseman, Max Shulman, Rudolf Flesch, Red Smith, Rod Serling

Photo by Philippe Halsman

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## PUB TALK

Just before press time we received word that Ann Halprin (picture on cover), whose "Five Legged Stool" is discussed in the preceding article by Sidney Peterson, has become the only American dance or theater personality invited to the Venice International Festival of Contemporary Music in 1963. She and her San Francisco company will collaborate with Europe's outstanding composer, Luciano Berio, on an original composition to be the feature work of the Festival, one of the most important musical events each year in Europe. She has also been invited to perform the "Five Legged Stool" at the Zagreb, Yugoslavia, Arts Festival, and at the time of the invitation was told by the Yugoslav delegate that the work "represents by far the most significant theater experiment in the United States." Here begins "The Arbitrarium" by Peter Edler. It is not a novel nor is it quite an autobiography. It is, possibly, the journal of a German-born American whose spiritual home is Byzantium. Arbitrarium is a word you will not find in any dictionary, and Edler, who devised it, is not positive what it means; still, as you read "The Arbitrarium," certain meanings become apparent—the title absorbs the text. Edler has not yet completed his book and does not know how long it will be, but further excerpts will appear in later issues of contact (and in no other magazine).

THE EDITORS

Swan song. Finished at twenty-seven. And all that after eluding the military placement bureaus of three countries. I'll look beautiful in a casket. The funeral will be with full military honors. Make your reservations now, if you wish to attend! The cemetery will be marked by a mushroom cloud.

I left Germany just before re-imbueum of the young, jitterbugging Hun with a proper sense of martial discipline—a sort of atonement for the sins of his father under the motto: "Halt The Hordes of Genghis Khan." How eagerly they flocked into the large beer halls to listen to their newly-appointed Defense Minister, a little man with the curiously significant name of Blank. It gave them a chance for a physical workout. They threw tomatoes, rotten eggs and—I blush at the thought of it—stones. Meanwhile I atoned in Canada. There is no compulsory military or any other kind of training in Canada.

Now, in the United States, I am too old. Nothing remains but the necessity to while away time. And I do

**FROM THE ARBITRARUM**  
BY PETER EDLER / PART ONE

not mind that although I know that it doesn't help. Nothing helps. My funeral is planned in every detail. If I can get my hands on the undertaker's schedule, I'll let you know the exact time.

The other day I received a little card in the mail. "If you're..." this and that and this and that, it said, "you need our help. Sincerely, Professional Placement Counsellors." Fools! They would place me. After the draftboards have failed. After I myself have failed! For many years now I have looked for a proper place. Nothing, except a coffin seemed suitable. And coffins are expensive. To buy one on the installment plan, for example, is more expensive than to rent a room, weekly, in a cheap hotel. Besides, in a casket they don't change shrouds once every two weeks.

Accordingly, I have painted the inside of my room black with a gold rim under the low ceiling. Under the gold rim I have painted a very narrow white stripe all around the room. This looks as though the lid doesn't quite fit and light is coming in from the outside. Very authentic. When I squint upward through half-closed lids, I have the satisfaction of owning, at least until I'm ejected, the largest coffin in the world.

What an environment for thoughts of death. Perfect. I've been thinking about the six million Jews killed by my father and his associates. Six million is a nice round figure. Six million. You can write it shortly without wasting time or space. Sixmilliononehundredthousand-eighthundredandseventytwo takes the impact out of any newspaper headline, don't you agree? Besides, German precision is admirable and known throughout the world. When they say we're gonna stop at six million, they meant it. You know the little sign: Made In Germany? A big stamp of quality—almost as good as a Goodrich stamp. Unmade In Germany. Six million Jews unmade in Germany.

I talked to my father about it, years ago when I was still interested in the moral implications and aspects of the problem. "Dear father, what were you doing on Pearl Harbor Day?"—"I was in Russia, supervising Russians."—"Dear father, what were you doing on Hiroshima Day?"—"I don't quite remember the date, it wasn't publicized much, you know. But I think I was in a P.O.W. camp being supervised by Englishmen."—"Dear father, did you know while fighting in Russia that

Jews were being exterminated, murdered that is, in Germany?" — "I heard rumors which were too atrocious to believe." — "You mean they never advertised Auschwitz openly with the soldiers when they must have known that this would be a tremendous boost to their Teutonic morale?" — "No, never." — "Funny," I said, "I thought all Germans knew about it."

Some of my best friends are Jews. Some of my best friends are Negroes. Difficult to believe? All right. Lenny Bruce, for example, is a personal friend of mine. And I once almost made love to a daughter of a remote cousin of Duke Ellington. With such friends I could easily leave my coffin. Lenny never refuses help to anyone, not even a German. And I daresay there's a job cleaning instruments on the Ellington band. They can't possibly clean their own instruments all the time. Besides, with nothing but Negroes in the orchestra, it's about time they stop discriminating.

As a German I should be more apologetic. Often I say to myself, "German, be apologetic. Your nation has brought woe to countless other nations. American, French, Russian, and other men, women, and children have died under the ruthless heels of your soldiers." Then again I often say to myself, "Be unsubtle. Unsubtlety is a typically Germanic trend. If you are subtle, people might have difficulty recognizing you. Then, once they find out you're German, they might be irked by the fact that you are subtler than they are. So, be unsubtle. Don't embarrass your friends." What would you do in my position?

It is better to get it over with in the beginning. I apologize. My God, how good that feels! I apologize. Particularly to the following modern leaders whose glowing example stands reprimandingly before my conscience. Those men who, by word and dedicated action, have helped to make the world a safer, saner place to live in. The Brothers Dulles—I apologize to them and all the other philanthropic brothers. Dulles Rides Again. The Return of Foster Dulles. The Brothers Dulles Meet The Brothers Mao and Tse Tung. I apologize again. It's always good for a German to apologize. Particularly when he's young and still trustworthy. Easier to forgive him that way. And I didn't mean what I just said about the brothers. The memory of a dedicated man must not be soiled.

Why must the memory of a dedicated man not be soiled? Because the man is dead. He is no longer around to defend himself. It wouldn't be fair to soil his memory when he can't object. If Foster were alive now I could say, "Foster's a pig." And everyone would say, "By god, you're fair." They would say, "Gee, you're a fair guy. Foster is still alive. He can defend himself. You're not soiling his memory." Foster himself would leap forward eagerly, cane in hand, shouting, "Ah, German, you have done the unforgivable. Attacked me in public. Hah, take this and that and this and that for good measure." Several presents would exchange hands—stocks of I. G. Farbenindustrie or Bayerische Farbwerke Hoechst which he still kept around from the last war, just in case there is truth in the rumors from Argentina. And I would attack him no more. I apologize. Foster is dead. Only his brother and his spirit are alive. And they are preparing to bury me in a hurry. But I'm ready. *Ich habe ja meinen eigenen Sarg. Die Miete ist für drei Wochen im voraus bezahlt.*

Sorry. All this must sound terrible coming from a man in a casket. If you're extreme you will say, "So what else is new?" If you are moderate you will say, "Gee, I didn't know that. I didn't know it was that bad." And if you are conservative you will say, "He's making it up. Not a grain of truth in it." Anyway, I started out writing pleasantly, the way everything should be. Just nice and pleasant, so you can smile a little and squash a little tear and feel a little humane and forget a little. In fact, I started out relating a humorous incident.

A man was convicted recently for swindling sixty-three people from all walks of life out of a total of \$32,000. Somewhere in California he had opened a school where they were taught how to survive an atomic blast without any other protection than their normal clothing. On the theory that a human being will eventually become accustomed to anything, this man argued that increasing exposure to heat and blast would eventually render his students immune to even the most terrifying explosions. They started out with Chinese firecrackers in an over-heated room. The fraud was discovered when an elderly lady complained to a doctor about losing an arm in a synthetic gas explosion.

I was going to start out pleasantly, telling you about childhood nights of moon whispers and veiled green fog

and the sound of velvet wings high up under the stars. I was going to tell you about damp meadows and the glittering of dew over the clear green of fragile grass. About the blood red beech tree behind the crumbling mansion in which I once lived. The beech tree whose leaves turned darker each day, until in the late fall they fell, scorched and dried blood of life on chilled ground. And about the sun that was powdering caked mud into floury clouds of dust under the hoofs of horses pulling us along dikes, past languorous villages toward an uncertain bend of the river far in the quivering summer distance.

I was going to work out a theme so beautiful, so encompassing, so grand that it would change you, go deep down into you and envelop and saturate you until your body would be your body no longer and your brain would have surrendered to warmth and beauty and to the soft smiles of tired children looking at you across a candlelit table.

I was going to write about the German spring, to make you understand that the spring in Berlin is gentler and yet crisper than anywhere else in the world. And about the Canadian fall, which is fierce and flaming and burns the vast country clean to prepare it for the coming winter. And about the gold of California's summer hills and the fog that divides the passing day there from the advancing night.

I was going to share strange, silvery secrets with you; draw aside heavy, dark-red, silk-embroidered curtains covering the immense darkness known only to me in its smallest detail. I was going to talk to you about the swift, silent black of icy river water, its vapor rising slowly, reluctantly into clear winter air. About the impossibility of retracing one's steps in deep snow because it would mean leaving the immense whiteness ahead untouched. About open windows in large rooms that have become dents made by heavy summer air into sturdy apartment buildings. About my reluctance to move about in such rooms for fear of disturbing the stillness, causing a whirl, ever so slight, causing ripples of air going out into the open and upsetting the balance of summer Sunday afternoons. About pigeons in a soft rain on an adjoining roof, looking ahead, all eyes sleepily fixed on an unimportant spot wavering in the grey rain mist across the street. Pigeons ruffling their feathers, moving their heads, rearranging their wings to let the drops slide down. And about myself in a lake, sinking deeper into unknown bluish nebulae of weeds moving silently under my frog's feet, breathing noisily, crudely, but creating bell-shaped mercury bubbles that grow as they rise toward the warm surface.

Instead I have started talking about imperfections. Coffins, explosions, and The Brothers Dulles. About Harry Belafonte who refused the male lead in "The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse" because he thought the word ended in an O. About Eichmann who asked for clemency on the grounds that he is an orphan, his parents having been gassed accidentally during a demonstration at one of the camps. About the new rocket belt that will enable the Soldier of the Future to jump over the charred bodies of his beltless comrades up to—and I

quote from the *Journal of Advanced Military Science*—“a height of several hundred feet.” And about the Pope who will confer for the first time in history with Chancellor Adenauer, President Kennedy, and an obscure camel driver from Pakistan.

The Pope, incidentally, is rumored to take dope. He does not get it from those pale-faced, gaunt, dark-haired dandies of New York's apartment blocks. Not always, anyway. He gets it from healthy-looking, naturally-tanned, olive-skinned Mexicans with soft, friendly, pleading eyes and round faces like young girls'. He gets it from men with good white teeth and strong shoulders under colorful shirts.

And what if the rumor were true? Would it explain his visions? Do you think that, once returned to the dreary life of the Vatican, he would start thinking about another injection? Do you then believe that the Pope could actually be tempted?

I apologize. It is too easy to satirize the Pope's actions, to ridicule his beliefs. Often what he says has only to be put in print to have the anti-papists of this world in stitches. No. Men of strength and courage see no challenge in that. Men of intelligence find this sort of amusement too shallow. To them only the quasi-impossible is worth being attained. To them faith is important. To them the Challenge is to Believe—truly, deeply with every fiber of their being. To know that the Pope is Truth—that is the challenge.

At night, for example, when the narrow white strip above me has disappeared in the dark, I am tempted to accept the Challenge. I am tempted to do the impossible. I am tempted to escape from my coffin, raise the lid, dig upward through porous soil and stand free on top of my own grave, breathe freely, walk freely, dodge other graves, tiptoe softly over well-kept lawns to the exit. Only one thought keeps me down and holds the lid in place. What if there were no end to the cemetery above? It would be a cruel disappointment even to undertakers. And undertakers are businessmen. As such they have certainty. It is pleasant to listen to them. They know. They have always known. "Tomorrow," say the undertakers of America, "tomorrow we're going to discuss the new price lists with our competitors." In Russian, I wonder? "The day after tomorrow," say the undertakers of America, "prices will be raised across the board. Yes sir. So that nobody gets a chance to step out of line." You won't believe me, of course. You don't know that I have sat at their conference tables. You don't know that I've listened to them when there were no microphones and no stenographers and no bus stops to interrupt them. And believe me: they're certain.

"Now, Mr. Edler, this bank is expanding, new positions become available every week, lots of room for progress, just what an ambitious young man would want. Now as a teller, we feel, you share a heavy load of responsibility. After all, you are the bank's direct contact with the customer. On your smile depends the future of all our operations, so to speak. Later, as you work your way up through the bank, Mr. Edler, you'll get to know the boys in the other departments. Then, when you've

acquired a thorough knowledge of banking, when you've met..."

He is thoroughly concerned with my future. And so am I. If he could read my mind he would know that I'm dangerous, the most dangerous man alive because I know Government Savings Bonds. I know that their numbers have to be registered both at the Federal Reserve Bank and at the private bank. I walk up to the teller the next day. My face is determined. I'm wearing a large hat with soft brim. I'm wearing sunglasses. I'm wearing a huge, bulky coat. I wait patiently in line. When my turn comes I slip him a note saying, "I have just stolen 5000 Savings Bonds. These bonds are unnumbered and unregistered. I am carrying them on me in bundles of fifty. Hand over all your money. If anyone tries monkey business I shall throw myself on the floor and roll around, thereby mixing up the savings bonds and throwing the Federal Reserve System into utter chaos." The teller knows of the Mad Bomber in New York and the man in Toronto who threatened to blow up an entire bank. He is horrified. He knows that the economy of the entire nation is in danger. I open my coat in front just to show him that I'm not bluffing. He hands over the money hastily. On my way out I pull a string and drop the bonds anyway, just for the hell of it.

But this is child's play compared to bringing down a suspension bridge. You need weight and a certain, constant rhythm to start it oscillating. A monkey crossing the Golden Gate Bridge is no good for various reasons. One: He treads too lightly. Two: He often breaks his step. Three: He wants to climb over the side. Four: He has to be accompanied, which would break up the rhythm. Five: He doesn't weigh enough. A dog is better but still won't do. Dogs stop and lift their legs occasionally. Ten elephants of identical weight might turn the trick. However, their weights must be identical to the milligram. The simplest way of doing it, of course, is to import a platoon of German soldiers, goose-stepping at medium speed across the bridge. When the Golden Gate gives, two birds are killed with one stone. Not only do the German soldiers drown but San Francisco Bay is blocked and Alcatraz prevented from being towed out into the sea by Cuban saboteurs.

Goose-stepping reminds me of my childhood. I used to goose-step a lot. Round and round and round, never going anywhere. This was close to the Russian border and if I had once broken the circle because of a tiny miscalculation, I might have walked right into Mother Russia, in fact, I might still be walking—with a beard and protesting the testing of nuclear weapons. I goose-stepped instinctively. To a German, as you probably know, goose-stepping comes natural. As natural as missiles and gas. But I will not continue boring you with guilt-ridden fantasies. I shall, instead, praise writers of importance.

Joseph Conrad, for example. Conrad is undoubtedly the most interesting psychosymptomatic writer in the history of literature in America. He wrote a story entitled "The Nigger of the Narcissus." It has since become the bible of the Ku Klux Klan. Now in this story Conrad

has condensed the essence of two crucial American problems: the color problem and the problem of erotic gratification through self-admiration. This, mind you, being of Polish extraction, living in England when not captaining large vessels and, to top it all off, having only superficial contact with and knowledge of American Folk Singers as they were then known.

I admit that the color problem is really not a very urgent one in the U.S.A. of today. It is counterbalanced adequately by anti-Semitism and puritanism. The problem of erotic gratification through self-admiration or other introspectively dubious means is more complex. It takes foreigners like Conrad to bring it into focus.

Other countries have even more complex sexual problems. I met a Frenchwoman once who wrote me a note in which she informed me that a letter awaited me, *poste restante*, at a distant post office. In the letter she told me that she would be happy to see me if I could come to her home in less than an hour, traveling exclusively by bus. At her house she had hired a string quartet and paid them not to play but to watch the proceedings. She considered members of string quartets among the most refined people in the world. Then she disappeared in the bathroom only to return naked with a World War II hand grenade from which she quietly removed the safety catch, telling me to leave immediately or be blown up along with her. I left immediately, of course. When I arrived home a messenger handed me a little package that kept ticking inside. With much tremble of hand and flutter of heart I opened it. It contained a beautiful wrist watch and a letter addressed to me. "*Mon petit animal alemand*. Accept this as a token of my deep gratitude. Only a German could have satisfied me in this way. Punctually and methodically you adhered to the schedule. I had my first orgasm in years. I shall never forget you. Monique."

Ah, what childlike innocence! But I, too, was once a child, a child like any other, meticulous perhaps, stubborn occasionally but otherwise normal. I had the biggest collection of splinters in our neighborhood in Berlin. I was out first in the morning after the raids when the air was still hot with the surrounding fires, saturated with smoke and not like morning air at all. Surprise. No houses across the street. Out I went cautiously. Some air mines never exploded until a child, mind you, a child—not an adult—stepped on them. Americans, said the radio, hailed beautiful fountain pens from their planes for German children to pick up and explode. You'd pick up a fountain pen, see, smile at it because it was so beautiful, start thinking of what you could do with it, see, how the others would envy you for having such a beautiful fountain pen and then, still smiling, you'd take off its cap and—boom—almost as loud as a bazooka, went the fountain pen and you were already on your way to joining the nonexistent houses on the other side of the street. That's what the radio said. I'm only repeating it.

There was a pile of rubble on the other side of the street where some of my playmates used to live. Crews of elderly men with paunches and not at all stern faces

were working to clear away bricks from entrances and extract those in the basements. In one basement there were at least twenty-five people. They were carried out one after the other in different poses. Some of them were sitting up straight, others doubled over on one side, so that it was impossible to tell whether or not they had been caught standing up or resting on the floor. They were all excellently preserved. Their mouths were open. That was the first thing to do when the bombs started coming down to equalize the pressure. It hadn't helped them much. Their lungs had been torn apart, burst, were now mushy sacks of fluids inside of them. Otherwise they looked peaceful.

I had the biggest collection of splinters in the neighborhood. Pointed, narrow ones from shells; heavy-walled, ringed ones from anti-aircraft grenades; solid, greenish ones from air mines; small, round, brittle ones from incendiary bombs; thin, wispy ones from the wings of bombers. There they were in my room, piled into four large cartons for all the world to see. An inestimable trading value they had! Two pictures of Max Schmeling for a splinter the size of a thimble. One picture of the Führer with Cap for a large splinter. For the same splinter: one picture of the Führer without Cap plus one of U-9—if you preferred the Führer without Cap and with U-Boat, that is.

I remember walking across the street, cautiously, my mind on splinters. I walked away from the emergency crews, up a staircase that ended behind an empty-windowed wall on a pile of bricks and twisted girders—eyes on the ground. Watch for mines, Peter. If you could ever find one too heavy for you to carry, you could sit on it and claim it. Watch for mines, not for a patch of hair and some blood. A patch of hair growing out of the rubble like a greyish-brown flower, a northern cactus in a strange desert. Stop, Peter, and look at that strange flower. Try to find its relation to the surrounding chaos. Does it really belong here? Has someone joked with creation and planted a brownish plant where it did not belong? The top of a head, that's what it is. The top of an old, blood-spattered head with grey hair. Not a cactus at all. And my surviving friends' faces around me pale, in awe, astonished. Death they have all seen. But not in this form, half-buried, quasi-invisible, the horror of what is concealed beneath the human flower throwing us into frenzied flight. Run, run, all of you, down the mountain of brick, over to the rescue crew to tell them about it.

She was an old woman. I never went back to see her. My braver friends told me about her. She stayed in her room. Didn't want to go down. Had trusted in her God. A Lutheran Protestant God at that. Not the rosebeads-fingering Catholic God who could not be trusted. She didn't want to go because she said her Lutheran God decided for her. If she was to die, very well, she was ready. As ready, perhaps, as I am now.

I was going to write beautifully, not about bombs but about the Botanical Gardens in Berlin. Flowers and cactuses there, too. My parents and I visiting. That heavy scent of damp, un-Germanic air in the tropical section. Memories of Rommel rolling across the desert, the prop-

aganda fox of the British, the clever general, very much the man pregnant with thoughts of assassination and suicide. There are meat-eating plants in that Botanical Garden in Berlin. Would a chewing gum upset their eating habits? A good, clean, clever, post-war remark by my father. There is the enormous, rusty, burnt out cage of the former main hothouse; a giant birdcage at last true to its purpose. No glass between the iron girders. The birds come and go, fly in and out as they please. No one restricts them, no one keeps them, no one pulls curtains over their heads at night. For once they are truly at home in a cage. And the war has caused that. What did they grow in here when it was still what it had been designed to be? Everything. I mean it. It harbored and protected the entire known flora of this planet.

But all this no longer applies now. Now Billy Shirer writes about what would have happened if, and about what actually happened because. Because of what, Mr. Shirer? Do you really know why? Have you unveiled the mysteries of the past, assembled all the secret documents, carried load after load of ancient Sanskrit scrolls to your enormous desk and sat there, deciphering, comparing, making marginal notes, thinking, writing again and issuing press releases about the progress of your work? Have you conferred with the editors of *Look* and the makers of *Kool*? When is that fifteen-volume account of Eichmann's last stand going to come out? Prologue, Mr. Shirer?

Eichmann: "Your honor, clemency, mercy, I'm an orphan." Judge Landau: "How so?" Eichmann: "My parents are dead." Judge Landau: "What happened?" Eichmann: "During a demonstration of the installations, accidentally, *ein unglückliches Verschen, ich selbst hatte noch einmal alles überprüft—bitte—Gnade...*"

Mr. Shirer, what books would you have written without the brutal past?

The most beautiful state? Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, of course. Wyoming is endless. Utah is endless. Nevada is endless. People go to Europe to look at the Alps, see Paris, break a leg in Rome or smile in Pisa, holding up the tower with one hand. Returning, their cameras are crammed full of images. Secret, shadowy brooks with clear water and deep-hanging branches of heavy foliage over them. An old stone bridge, a castle across the Loire. Cobblestones and the echo of Orson Welles' footsteps in Vienna everywhere. Eternal sewers flowing under their feet, mysteriously, natural rivers ending in the distant sea. Beer and darkly circled, stained wooden benches and tables in Munich. A faint memory of glowing noses at the Oktoberfest. An ex-member of the Cab Calloway group leading a mountain Schrammelband. Hand wrestling with a Montana cowboy across a Bavarian oak table. They move on. Spain, Monaco, pregnant on the Riviera. Budapest is still too dangerous. The mechanical retinas click. The images are held forever awaiting—two thousand years from now—discovery in a forgotten box in a forgotten house, only slightly faded, ready to be looked at. Brooks ready to murmur clearly, foliage ready to rustle heavily, plaster casts on the Piazza San Marco white and ready to gleam in the sun. The leaning tower,

long since dust, only slightly off balance, held by the outstretched arm. The photographs are ready. A little light is needed. Nothing else. A little light and an arm to hold the slides against the sun.

And meanwhile Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming stay where they are—disdainful, detached, and endless, their impact so powerful that one has to rush through on the way to Europe for fear of being crushed or detained for a long time. There is only one veteran without legs, selling pencils and shoelaces between Salt Lake City and Cheyenne. One war cripple every two million square miles. The country is endless. There is room for millions and millions of veterans between Salt Lake City and Cheyenne.

Europe is not as exhausting. Drive slowly in Europe, there's an idyllic town ahead. Drive slowly in Europe, there is so much to see. Drive slowly in Europe, you might cross a border unwittingly. Drive slowly in Europe, don't show off.

Up in Canada roads lead to the North. They are frightening roads, darkening tracks of gigantic snails creeping north toward icy waters and certain death. It requires courage to travel these roads. Each mile north requires strength and new decisions. How much farther shall we go, Charlie? All the way into the dusk, all the way to Fort Churchill, past the hills and the ski-tows into that frightening silence of the North? Do you have courage? Do you have enough gasoline? Do you have warm underwear or are you going to brave that piercing cold, bare and barrel-chested as you are? Is your flaming red beard meant for this climate or just a cheap replica of the one that once rode across the Holy Land, eight feet high and invincible, Charlie? Will you dare squeeze into that narrow space between road and eternity above it? Do you have enough courage for both of us, Charlie? Is that the howling of wolves or just the wind catching up with the car? We will have to stop soon. What if we run out of gas? What then, Charlie? Which is closer, Fort Churchill or Montreal? Can we reach either on snow shoes? Can we risk it? Come on, Charlie, let's turn around and get back to Montreal and brag about how far north we went.

Think of Utah when you drive through Europe. Think of Fullmer, the tough man from Neanderthal, Utah, who fears no one—not even the aging, brittle-boned, tax-ridden Harlem Dandy, the Bronze Hope who once danced through the prize rings and nightclubs of the world, surrounded by women, court jesters, barbers, masseurs and managers: Sugar Ray Robinson. Pit the White Hope against the Black Hope, managers, promoters, businessers, and underworlders. Pit the Yellow Peril against the Red Danger. Remember that day in the Thirties when Der Max knocked out the Brown Bomber? I remember it. I was sitting on my father's lap at three o'clock in the morning, thousands of miles away, not knowing what they were trading in the center of the ring. Not knowing what unfinished business could not wait till the morning. Round Twelve, the Bomber down on his knees, kneeling in a praying position, his fists clutching feebly at the ropes. Now he rolls over on his

side, on his face—eight, nine, ten. That's it. Out. Der Max is dancing wildly. Why is he dancing wildly? A race triumph? The joy of victory after a hard-fought battle? Looking forward to devastation in Round One of the return match? Who knows? Let him dance wildly. He will be drafted symbolically in 1939, parachuted down on Crete, take the European bull bravely by the horns, and survive valiantly with only slight injuries to permit meeting the fat Bomber later, after the war, on a friendly basis, on the occasion of another Black Hope being pitted against a White Hope.

There is no hope across the street from my casket at the Polyclinic. A hospital never has hope. This one is a concentration camp for rats. There are several large stalls along one side of it toward its back yard. Animals, rats, are removed at the rate of one or two a day to be subjected to vivisection and similar treatment. A sign over the stalls reminds gently: Use large (older) rats first. Then they are, flat on the wooded boards, one pressed against the other to conceal their real size, most of them clever enough to eat only while the feeding hand is there while human eyes are watching them. Later, if possible, to vomit so that growth is retarded, so that they do not have to go first. But it all amounts to the same thing. By starving themselves deliberately they go down to the same level, all of them. They are not inhibiting selection by size. The larger ones are still used first. And they are hastening death. Some die of starvation before the hairy hand of the medical man grabs them.

. I have protested this treatment of rats. I have said, "I'd like to buy some of your rats to protect them from being exterminated in this manner."—"They're not for sale."—"I'll pay anything you want."—The young medicine man, jokingly, "Anything?"—"Well, not quite anything. Anything reasonable, I mean." Okay, he says at last, so and so many rats for such and such much money. I agree. I pay. I take my rats. But before leaving I ask a question. "Sir, what are you going to do with the money?"—"Buy new rats, of course."

Up in my own casket room rats are crying in pain because I do not have enough money to feed all three hundred of them and because I am still alive. I suppose I shall have to give them back to the Polyclinic eventually. Be it known that I tried. I will return them to their stalls under protest, only because I have no other choice. And I will insist that the sign be amended to read: Use any old rat first.

These are not sewer rats, you must understand, or rats that are grey and agile in barns in the country. I am talking about the refined, experimental kind of rat which we have bred to exterminate after subjecting it to our rapacious curiosity. The other rats are too big and too ferocious. They fight. "Come here, you big sonofabitch, let me get you out of that...ouch, goddammit. He's bitten me. Quick, some iodine and a Band-aid!" I've been reminded that rats detest being killed. I have been reminded that they have an extremely delicate sense of privacy which can be upset by as little as the touch of a human hand. I have been reminded that rats have just as nasty a temperament as everyone says they do. I have

been reminded, above all, to send the assistant the next time I want one of those big guys from the cage.

There must be thousands of rats in the barns of Iowa —free, with plenty of privacy and a clean, belligerent spirit. I wouldn't be surprised if the rats in Iowa chase mice instead of eating wheat. Iowa is full of rats. Wyoming is full of gas stations, containing men's rooms with little dispensing machines. Medicine Bow, Wyoming, on the big road leading east and west. There are three dispensing machines, three types that is, in Medicine Bow, Wyoming. One for prophylactics, the other two for ointments. The first ointment is called De-Lai and its pronunciation is spelled in parentheses underneath: (Delay). It delays climax in the male thereby permitting the female to achieve satisfaction first. Ladies first. In Wyoming. Is it the climate? Or the lack of women that makes men so anxious to please?

The second ointment is called Lady-Fly. It heightens, so the advertisement says, "vaginal sensitivity." I wonder

what would happen if two humans used both ointments simultaneously. In Wyoming. In the heat of summer.

Lady-Fly. De-Lai. Huge, dark, swift-moving trucks penetrate the U.S., up along Route 66 from Los Angeles to Medicine Bow, Wyoming, at night. During the day they remain hidden behind rocks in the desert just off the road in order not to embarrass traveling motorists. They carry under their tarpaulins COD — cod, cod-liver oil. At Medicine Bow, again at night, sinewy fists of American businessmen pull away the canvas and carry the precious load into the gas station. There the ointment is transferred into tubes marked De-Lai. A sinister but harmless metamorphosis. Cod-liver oil extract! We give it to our children to strengthen their bones, to delay —no—to inhibit retardation. Why not use it externally? It prolongs the sexual act pleasurable, delays conveniently and will lead eventually to the abolition of rape, prostitution, teen-age pimples, and all other undesirable, socially enigmatic excesses. •



## suite of mirrors

1

That oval first, elaborate with lies  
as if a lyre, instead of strung with wires,  
framed sighs my silver adolescence was—  
eyes a pool, Narcissus in reverse,  
I leaned to look and hated what I saw—  
pimpled slimness, fiery hair askew,  
merciless mercury reflecting every flaw  
no pill or brilliantine could chisel smooth.  
But there were clearer mirrors, ones in books  
whose hale and handsome heroes had my face,  
twins of thought and feeling, if not looks;  
the actual mirror was a box of tricks  
that seemed to gleam, but gave back to my gaze  
a crooked aspect in a clouded glass.

2

Once in the mirror of an old armoire  
two lovers lurched, watching, as they touched,  
those tarnished bodies of the coupling pair  
who clutched and clasped what they, too,  
clasped and clutched.  
Two snakes, through ornate leaves, were carved in curves  
around the glass, their necks entwined at the top;  
their wood tongues seemed to hiss this scene like Eve's  
no threat of death or banishment could stop.  
In a bower beyond the waverings and flakes,  
a mirrored power flashing flesh to one,  
flawed man and woman dazzled in perfection,  
timeless and good, though twittered at by snakes.  
And still they kiss, and still their images  
kiss until the beveled prism fades.

3

Our children mirror more than only us—  
multiplied behind them in long rows,  
silver millions share their likenesses.  
This girl who capers in ancestral clothes,  
peering and preening in the glaring door,  
is Esther, Blanche, Rebecca Chamberlain,  
of look and lacks, the small inheritor,  
an heirloom beauty echoing through time.  
She's fashioned of reflections, flashes back  
a face that's classic, a cameo of bones;  
mimicry deeper than the mirror's mock  
shimmers her primping image as she turns  
to try a backward look at backwardness  
and hears the pier glass sigh with silken ghosts.

4

Elegance itself, but dug from junk  
—perhaps the Pharaoh's palace garbage heap—  
Hathor on the handle, horns distinct  
and cow ears conspicuous, a woman beast,  
the moon round bronze she balances polished once,  
undoubtedly belonged to a lady of high rank,  
her metal bracelets ringing as, entranced,  
she gazed at her favorite face by the bullrush bank.  
The wig she wore was purple, red, or green;  
she lengthened her eyes with pencils or a brush;  
the Nile flowed slowly, an ibis in no rush  
flapped upward through intensity, and then,  
she may have noticed lines from nose to mouth,  
and, timeless woman, flung the mirror out.

5

Men, too, fear mirrors. I know one  
watcher of cheerless changes, famed in frames,  
his blond mane gradually greying (unlike mine)—  
girlish as Alice at her sinister games,  
he steps through silver into fantasy,  
Among grey ancients on the other side,  
he plays the ailing prince of tragedy,  
always at Elsinore with no place to hide.  
You might think history teaches; it repeats;  
page after page, a poem in perfect rhyme  
tolls echoing bells from both sides of the sheets  
for births and funerals, tells the time  
of ageless Alice, Hamlet's fallacies—  
the latest light from vanished galaxies.

6

Besides this vanitas, these various Versailles  
kept in a pocket or hinged so they will swing  
in the clinic of the bathroom's tide and steam,  
dwarfs of distortion, giants of surprise  
a humorous house of mirrors shows us as,  
lustrous squares and circles, pool where fools  
believe the glassy lie and love themselves,  
there are more mirrors than our I's suppose—  
periscopes rising from seas of perilous green,  
shining rounds that light the microscope  
disclosing dragons in the small unseen,  
and scanning sturriness, like fear or hope,  
the mirrored telescope, the mystic eye  
where far infinities wheel and magnify.

HAROLD WITT

*24 June* Officially, I am caretaker of Eagle Island, Casco Bay, coast of Maine. My duties: to keep souvenir hunters off this home of the late Admiral Robert E. Peary and to prevent idle tourists from setting fire to a small corner of Creation.... Tonight we watched the tide come in and our spotted sandpipers go to bed. The old bird hauled up out of the spray, looking for no other shelter; her three babies, beautifully mottled and delicately long legged, vigorously stilted their teetering little bodies into the warmth of parent belly.

Earlier, Margaret and I dragged Kathleen through the underbrush to the southern end of our seventeen acres, where gulls reign. Baby gulls and eggs lay everywhere and we trod carefully. Gray bodies, stretched out in the crouching pose of baby gulls, continued to turn up long after we retreated from the trampled weedy area that I should have at first called the gullery proper. Some gulls are pioneering into the mare's-nest of chokecherry and sagging spruces; they trample the soil; they stamp out the heads of spruces; they ride down the cherry hedges—thus gulleries expand.

We surprised an incubating eider duck (to be truthful, *all* of us were surprised). Funny thing is, her nest is right in the middle of the gull colony. A dangerous thing, one would think, for gulls certainly love eider eggs. The poor hen eider, without a chance to cover her five eggs with the lips of the bowl of down that they lay in, rushed, flopping heavily, for the water over the cliff's edge, defecating on the eggs as she left. Perhaps the canny eider uses some two hundred very vocal gulls as watchdogs; it would be interesting to know whether she ordinarily leaves the eggs during the day when gulls are most active.

I saw at least sixteen adult eiders and eighteen young at one time this morning—a reassuring westward extension of the eider's breeding range, for eiders were not long ago almost extinct on the coast of Maine. One of the adults today was a male that had already molted into dull plumage; two males at the south end of the island still sported their beautiful last-winter's nuptial dress. Males seem to be taken up with bachelor affairs now: they feel no compulsion to raft with females and young that are so dependent upon each other socially.

Gulls go from all over our island to follow a fishing boat that passes. They return with solemn purpose as the boat gets too far away.

*26 June* Yesterday Margaret and I finally got squared away for a trip for mail and supplies. We took Kathleen: a foolish move I suppose, for she was quickly mesmerized by the sea scenery and the sound of the motor. For a three-year-old she is ordinarily very resourceful, but she went right off to sleep and would not even hold on to the side of the boat.

As we were going out at low tide, the sea was quiet. It was not, however, the smooth-dimpled glassy sea of Sunday and our trip over from Freeport in a lobster boat.

Being ignorant of the seaside approaches to Harpswell, I went in cautiously; had to make inquiries where to tie up, where the post office was, whether groceries and oil could be had in South Harpswell.

We can get only mail at Harpswell. To obtain food, we headed around Potts Point into Merriconeag Sound, keeping well out, when we could have saved time by cutting a few corners. I steered for Cook's, since that was the only place on Bailey Island that I recognized. We got a bite to eat and I found where we could buy groceries.

The tide was coming in before we started back. I was anxious, for our motor is weak for sea travel. We lost precious minutes a little after leaving Bailey because I had forgotten to refill the gasoline tank. We got into roughish water above Ram Island (one of many: the ewe-proof pasture in the old days for the celibate seasons of rams, I suppose). Kathleen was asleep and a dead weight for Margaret to support. The bulky life jackets are awkward to deal with, and probably of use only to persons who prefer slow freezing in the icy Gulf of Maine to a quick drowning. To me, Margaret never seemed alarmed at all.

We slowed down for a glimpse of some sixteen seals on the tidal rocks west of Haskell Island. Water was piling up in the bay there with the flow of the tide, flooding their late sunning spots and putting the dry, lovely seals to an eventual wetting. Yet, as if fearful of the water, they were staying dry and high as long as

\* With thanks to Marie Peary Stafford, who made it possible.



JOURNAL OF A MAINE ISLAND SUMMER\*

DANIEL McKINLEY

possible! How funny to see them "hand-standing" on one arm in the shallow water, as if on its surface, while both tail and head arched the pliable body into a crescent. They took to the water as we neared, following our movements with their intelligent eyes.

Unfortunately we could not stay. The sea looked rougher and rougher in the open stretch beyond the shadow of Haskell. Gray clouds had thickened above, and it was gray indeed below.

Today is still gray; Margaret has just remarked how cold the view *looks* even though the temperature on our east porch is 65°. Our knowledge of weather is somewhat limited, for we find that the barometer does not work.

One is surprised by the naked, black loom of schists humping up under the currant bushes in the middle of the island. In the imagination of an unprepared moment, they take the place of bears and other wilderness beasts.

Tried to bathe in the sea. I stripped but the water was cold! However, I felt all aglow with heat when I dried.

Driftwood blazes in the fireplace tonight. Both the cold churn of tidewater and the cheerless fog throw us upon its mercies.

I came to Eagle Island hoping I could watch seals. No seals live on the island, however. Then, the boat is a disappointment: too big to launch for mere curiosity runs and yet too small to anchor out. I, landlubber, could not study seals with the best of boats, I admit. The sea is rough today and there is a heavy fog.

*27 June* Cliff and tree swallows, on visits from the mainland, are constantly busy in the lee of the island. They snap up flies that swarm along the weed-choked beach. The flies themselves shy away from breezy shores and hug the sunny sea-walls.

Great blue herons flap with slow dignity to our woods at night. Maybe they find the solitude and the uninterrupted fishing worth the trip over. But they sit more than fish, in the long lucent evenings, like oriental calligraphy against the quicksilver water of twilight.

When three or four hen eiders join forces, their conglomerate of downy young bobs up and down so fast it is hard to count them. Yet, we see them often separate into family groups, for, though cohesiveness is catching, young and old recognize their own.

If I lived permanently on an island, I would have no houses but those of my own building. Houses can be eerie, especially when you are outside them. I have seldom felt so fatefully outside a house as in a few weird moments here.

I slashed a few paths. The grass and chokecherries I do not mind chopping, although it hurts my heart to slice the frosty stems of touch-me-nots. But the dews here are fabulous, and one had better wade in the sea than break a trail in early day.

*28 June* I cannot help feeling attracted to the meadow voles that are the island's only land mammals except our

temporary selves. They have apparently been at some times populous enough to over-run the whole island and gnaw their little social paths everywhere. I see them active now only on the north end near the house. I wonder how long remnants of their paths lie etched in soil surface and remains of old grass. These mice offer a beautiful population and behavior problem for the properly equipped naturalist; it is rare to find such a sharp little world as this island provides.

Gulls ride the updraft above the cliffs on the west side. How very fine they were today, beyond green leaves in the white and blue of the sky!

A green, young gull quickly ran into my shadow as I crouched in the gully this morning, apparently finding a squatting human quite acceptable as a protective device. Yet, when I stood up, it recognized the demon and instantly bolted into a weedy patch and lay prone. I could do nothing to persuade it to lie on my outstretched hand for a photograph.

Although I was asked to kill the gulls here, I refused. It seems to me that gulls are no more destructive at worst than man—and much more beautiful. It is somehow flattering to have them hound me from the bright sky, when I invade *their* end of the island. Perhaps it brings out the predator in me. There is the essence of dark wilderness in their mobbing cries.



If gulls were our sole enemies! Man, I am sure, is his own greatest enemy: not Communists or Capitalists, but ourselves equally. Each of us putting a little more of the future into fetters; each—and with so many of us—taking somewhat from the future its chance to a birthright that is free of staked-out claims.

Mankind's condition under what one might call a state of nature may have been a sorry sight, as some people tell us; but we have tinkered with death control until a wave of life threatens our doom. Not a pretty life, either, in the way life is lovely to a porpoise, a happy child or a herring gull; and an ugly doom, too, in which buoyant hope will play no part.

*30 June* The moon was on the sea last night and its coppery face matched the glimmering heads of cumulus clouds suffused in pools of lightning. Just at moonrise, a ribbon of flickering tinsel trailed from cliffside to the horizon.

A Monday. Low tide came at five p.m., and I eventually gave up going to Harpswell and Bailey in the vigorous south wind. We saw almost no small craft out today, and bigger boats were often taking a beating.

I am no sea rover. The first few swells always panic me, and I am then pleasantly surprised to find that boat and I are still afloat. I wish, I wish I knew more about the confidence limits of the sea and this boat.

*2 July* I went to Harpswell in the fog this morning to return the motor borrowed yesterday, traveling largely by compass. Peter brought our motor down. The borrowed motor was five horsepower: how different to sit beside!

The wind came up while I waited for mail. There was a hellish sea going all along the west edge of Flag Island, and a great swell between Flag and Eagle. Margaret watched through glasses my teetering, slow progress homeward. It was bad enough to suit me.

After the strenuous morning, we stripped and braved the cold water; what balmy froth the air becomes! Ordinarily, the wind is bone-chilling.

We put out the fish trap yesterday, baited with crushed blue mussels. We pulled it at low tide tonight. The trap came up with fish flapping. Margaret rushed off to the house and started coffee and reviewed her recipes; I cleaned the fish. I stooped from a rock and splashed the fish clean in deep water, leaving guts and heads for the gulls.

The fish were fried by the time I returned from lowering the trap.

*3 July* The trap brought in a five-pound ravenfish, three cunners, a cod and a pollock this morning. Some people might argue with my piscatorial nomenclature: I got it from a book. Also three large rock crabs and a small lobster. Margaret took a sickened look at the monster ravenfish. It was before breakfast and ravenfish cannot be called handsome. Said if I wanted to eat it, I could cook it. To keep the peace, I made bait of it. I

regretted to see its plump meat go to the waves. Especially since I am the cleaner of the wastefully small cunners and pollocks that are conventionally shaped.

Last night's slight shower was more than equalled by a big dewfall. The grass still coldly drenched us at noon. Went to pick skunk currants after lunch and Margaret made jelly from them tonight. Our first jelly and a real adventure. It tastes delicious: skunky enough to be unusual and success is promised in the jellying.

Our trap took only crabs and a small cunner tonight; fulfilling gloomy predictions. I extracted crab meat this morning. "Extracted" seems a bland word for it: a very tedious job and a thorough education in why to leave little ones in the sea.

As quiet tonight as we have had it. The sea is mercury smooth, a banded luminous expanse toward west and northwest. Terns, near sunset, flicker across the scene like scintillating flecks. At muddy moonrise the gulls at Flag Island are in screaming up-flight, a swirling, rising screed of birds.

*4 July* I caught a decent flounder today, bare-handed. We were out at low tide, hopping, slipping and wading among the weedy rocks, having just run the trap with no success. I waded along the ledge to the west; the island just ends chopped off there, with long brown kelps boiling up from your very feet, their fingering holdfasts hidden in the blackness of sea even at low tide.

There the fish lay, on a ledge in a few inches of water. I grabbed at it, and it jumped forward—out of the water. I pulled in our trap and placed the fish in it.

Tonight, we had added a bigger flounder and a pollock. Sand-dabs, I believe my flounders are properly called. Flat, almost circular, lovely fishes to the eye.

*5 July* How cold it is. Especially on the sea.

We have had a day of seals. Margaret is as excited as I am. Yesterday it was a small whale: currant jelly waited.

During breakfast preparations this morning, I turned the spotting 'scope on another whale that appeared a couple of times then dived to be seen no more. A "lobsterpot float" that I had just dismissed turned out to be a seal. Our first on the island!

The seal was still wet and lying on a rock in the lowering tide. The rock was cushioned with Irish moss and at its base lithe stems of kelp knuckled up in the wash.

Our seal is a wonderful, lazy, nervous animal, drying his hide and keeping it dry as long as possible when his perch finally returns to the sea.

He lolls stolidly. Any foot may scratch any part near it; the hind flippers are magnificently pliable and useful: he bends them easily at the knuckles and uses delicately the toes of one side to scratch the sole of the opposite foot. He slouches about easily; the backbone bends willingly any way at all, and the pot belly is as comfortable up as down, on one side as the other.

He dries slowly, the top of the head toasting into warm brown, even as the rest of his fur is uniformly

wetted into a glistening smooth tan. Irregular blotches and marblings of light and darker emerge as the seal's sides dry. Tears flow plentifully, making goggles of drab wet around the eyes, a look of extreme dissipation.

Harbor seals are said to be earless, but you can see well enough this seal's ears. Of course, it is the large external ear-flap that they lack, not the ear hole itself. In the same sense, a chicken can be said to be "earless."

Breathing is irregular, but I can watch it from my great distance, for the large nasal flaps flare open for the intake of air. They close tightly between breaths, an arrangement that must be beneficial to a diving animal. During a period of normal restfulness, I count forty-six breaths in one hundred seconds.

Water changes his color. He fell off his rock accidentally, and hitched—practically bounced—back quickly, his brown head streaked with blue-gray wetness. The wet pelt shines as if varnished and taut.

The seal settles down by midmorning to relative calm. His head droops as he cat-naps between brief looks about. But, during such a quiet period, he still rarely sleeps for as long as twenty seconds at a time without a quick glance about. A life of alertness!

Tide comes in and the seal clings to his roost, bellying into the rock. And he still catches his forty winks, even when only tail and head are arched out of the sea.

He fished much of the afternoon, during high tide, but apparently left before night. Eagle Island is certainly not an island of seals.

*6 July* The only two male eiders I saw today were not associated with the rather tight rafts of females and young: as if they were in disgrace as well as in eclipse plumage—the drab hen plumage that goes in ducks with the simultaneous loss of all flight feathers, when drakes look (and probably feel) like females.

*7 July* Found a beautiful ring-necked snake yesterday. An adult, about a foot long. Gartersnakes, at least, have been here a long time, former residents tell us. How do small, fragile snakes reach such islands as ours?

It was cold and quite evenly cloudy all yesterday; today there was not a minute when the sun shone right through. Rocks warmed, but it was only the long rays of the sun did it.

I walked to the gullery yesterday, via the eastern cliff-edge. The middle of the island is unimaginably lush. An English lushness, I almost said, but it is more like southern Alaska, for ferns and greenness. The gulls make such a sustained din that it is a relief to be turned away. They act relieved, too! They certainly do not follow your retreat as far as they greet you and put out the alarm on your arrival.

Today, in the dripping fog, I built a fire in the fireplace and typed and repaired a kerosene room-stove. Margaret put out a dinner of corn, fried fish and blueberry pie.

Many aurelia jellyfishes float and pulsate in our bay tonight. Near the jumping-off place of our new fish-trap site, we have found colonies of *Tubularia*, attached small relatives of jellyfishes, in sheltered furrows of rocks that are covered deeply at high tide.

The cold evening, dead with fog that has closed in again, is full of dripping sounds. In the wet darkness, periwinkles suck along moist rocks, water gurgles in an even surge of rise and fall. The wind itself is almost sobbing in the mist.

*8 July* Another wet day: rain in a downpour early and late and a foggy break between. Sawed and carried in the driftwood that our fireplace eats so greedily. A battle of the drainpipes this morning. For all the worry over a water shortage, I found that one pipe was not fastened to the cistern inlet. Over half our potential supply was not running in. The only cure for such an ailment is to raise the arms, fasten pipes together and let the water pour down the sleeves of your raincoat.

The surface of the sea was peculiar in the heavy rain. Speckled with raindrops, and yet the whole surface was polygonally netted into a pattern of rumpled, opaque water evenly cut by narrow oil-smooth lines.

Tonight, in heavy rain and fog, I can see the surging hump of tide swells over our rocks, and not much else. There is the bellbuoy, making in the darkness a louder loom than in the hard air and distracting visual cues of broad daylight. Parties of gulls are a-cry on Flag Island; a spotted sandpiper tootles softly on our own beach.

The catch this morning: two flounders, five gunners. We cannot run the trap tonight, for low tide comes too late.

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**11 July** The Amann's arrived today for a visit. In our trap we brought up five small cunners and a huge ravenfish. This time we decided that we should eat the ravenfish. But, after skinning it (no scales!), we discovered it was heavily infested with roundworms, not just the abdominal wall but the trunk muscles also. He had two of "our" cunners in his distensible flabby belly.

I went berrying yesterday afternoon. Skunk currants are dead ripe, beautiful in the rocky, overgrown openings and present in almost inexhaustible quantities. Red raspberries are just beginning to ripen, and I found a serviceberry tree.

Spent a lot of time on raspberries: much more than the results justified, in terms of marketable fruit. At least, with our small acreage, cleaner picking pays off. Country people, boys at least, with broader fields to skim from and perhaps a certain vitamin starvation to spur them on, can afford to measure berries by the mile.

As for the serviceberries, Gray's *Manual* is right: "dry and insipid." The very ripest ones do taste pleasant enough, although the flavor is a little hard to pin down; but I harvested rather too closely and the unripe berries stewed have a green, almondish taste. Still, the juice is good.

We now sample two other vegetable blessings here that the equivocal hand of civilization has bequeathed us. As I buried garbage, in the dismal fog that has water-bound our island all day, I found rhubarb which has survived uncultivated for many years near the old caretaker's cottage. Rude stuff, full of life; it practically comes up fighting from the pot.

Foxgloves, too, have escaped and are found all over the island in the same state of ruddy wildness as in England. Their giant towers crown the chief height of the gully; I have never seen them more beautiful.

Are visitors a failure? They have a good time; I have no doubt about that. But trying to give them an island experience in the few short hours available is defeating. Visitors are sometimes difficult enough even in the settled life of the country where yearly cycles run with such elephantine dignity that seasonal changes cannot be ignored. Here, in the mercurial uncertainties of tide and wind and fog, a visitor is much more likely to miss the significance of the rhythm. It is not an experience to him so much as just a piece of weather.

Then, again, comes the nearly inevitable argument over our remaining in Maine, despite the few opportunities. Accessibility to some wild land is a big part of our reason: the vast suburban bar to the outdoors makes such life impossible in most of the East and much of the West of this country. I doubt if even one's own Walden Pond would be worth the effort if it lay over yonder, through twenty miles of Suburbia, and was filled with tired picnickers when you finally got there.

**12 July** Foggy today and yesterday, with a terrific thunderstorm this afternoon, followed by another, somewhat less violent. The cistern fills! The anxious days are over, for a shortage of fresh water would send us off the island quicker than almost any other force.

The sea ran big last night, and in its turbulence, retched up a felting of loose seaweed for the netting of our fish trap. The bowels of the sea still churn, and with tonight's high tide, waves roll spectacularly.

**17 July** A fierce sea runs this morning, under the most blistering wind that we have had. The Amanns went home a week ago amid a spray of regrets on a calm, clear sea. There has been hardly any fog-free daylight since. And now, this wind: refreshing and defogging, but more island-tying than fog. Lucky the Amanns did go! But yesterday, in the heaviest fog yet, we had visitors—waxwings and barn swallows on the island for the first time.

The fish trap went out as usual yesterday afternoon. This morning, two pollocks, three cunners. I am now repulsed by fish. Too many, I guess; and, somehow, the sight of two badly parasitized ravenfish has not helped. I forgot to record the catch of our third large ravenfish: it had eaten at least five good-sized cunners.

**23 July** My innards start at the thought of fish or fishiness.

I dug clams one evenings recently. Got a small bunch, which we washed overnight. We steamed them over a fire on the beach. Kathleen helped Margaret put them into the pot and one squirted water from its siphon; she dropped it in disgust: "Ugh, it peed!"

With a pot of boiled coffee the clams were delicious.

All of us joined in the sport of another late-evening grabbling for clams, far past the daylight period, feeling more with cold-numbed hands than with eyes, and got about a gallon and a half. They did not taste as good as the first ones. Nobody wanted the remnants in chowder and they went to the gulls, always around for a handout.

Margaret was delighted with clam digging, a delight that is now more spiritual than gastronomic. The surprise, she says, is in finding a living thing among the muck. She now wishes we could dig them out, look at the catch and put them back. I am not sure, however, if adult clams could re-establish themselves on our stony beach.

**24 July** Here on the island, tide and weather have their way. Comes a good day—out of many rough, windy or foggy ones rather than do the photography and poking around the island that require decent weather, or the loping along beach and tidepool that Margaret and Kathleen think that I came to the island to do with them; I have to go to Harpswell (two miles) for mail and to Bailey Island (some two miles additional) for food, oil, and gasoline.

But what does one do? Margaret has made lovely red currant jelly. We now have all the red raspberries that we want. There will be blackberries later and I may have a chance to try chokecherry jelly before we leave.

We dare the very lowest tides to find sea anemones, blood-stars, ascidians, baby scallops, sand dollars and welks that the island secretes to surprise those who know these lovely animals as names only in guidebooks and

manuals of invertebrate zoology. And, more obviously, I never tire of the herring gulls that share our island world. Every minute with them has been enjoyable: I even overlook the times when I have to get out in a rainstorm to remove the remnants of crabs from the drains so that the cistern will fill. (Drinking water comes from a small, dug well, with no chlorine necessary.)

This morning, again, gulls are gagglng on the front lawn wall (which reaches steeply down to the sea); another gull ostentatiously examines his toes on the roof of an outhouse, above the little cranny where his young hatched and are now growing fat under our eyes.

Song sparrows sing.

Wispy bits of fog threaten to lift off the glassy surface of the ocean to reveal our houseless, neighboring islands.

*27 July* Fifty-three degrees in Brunswick this morning! Felt even colder here. Margaret broke out the hot-water bottle last night.

The cistern leaks.

*28 July* The redstarts have flying young that still flutter-beg for food. Their season of courtship and reproduction is over, but their spirited beauty remains. This morning I saw the male, sitting on a birch stub, tail and wings gloriously fanned.



We had a seal in very rough seas late tonight. He was reared up and watchful, possibly wishing we were off the beach so he could seek shelter. Certainly, their much-frequented rocks at Haskell offer them no haven at high tide.

*29 July* Cold and wet (and tonight very foggy) for the third day in a row. I still think I could live all my life here. But we need supplies. We started out short, and have never fairly caught up. Each visit from friends or trip to Bailey Island has taken care of some crying need only.

We found a baby ringnecked snake today. The poor thing had been stepped on, on the back porch step. At least they live here!

Cormorants in the perspectivelessness of the fog (to Harpswell by compass and part of the way back, ditto) looked ten feet high. Small cliffs loomed mountainous out of the mists.

*31 July* A spotted sandpiper in full autumn dress stopped by today, yet a parent sandpiper here with young hatched a few days ago is still in unmolted summer plumage.

*3 August* We are too much lord of what we survey. A devastated shoreline will never be as it was before; a forest and its age-old soil and the community that had woven life into its matted roots will never return when destroyed: these are ecologically final activities of freedom without love and responsibility.

*6 August* Meadow mouse trails in the gullery appear to be unused this year. The little runs lie as reticulate monuments to microtine kingdoms of a more fruitful season. What Four Horsemen governs the fate of those blunt-ended, myopic, and shaggy little mammals? Probably crows and gulls eat mice if they catch them (although I find no mouse bones in gull vomits this low-mouse year). Gartersnakes undoubtedly do eat them—in fact, scarce mice may mean scanty pickings for the snakes; I have seen snakes with uncomfortable bulges, and they seem to live right among the mice. On the other hand, I cannot tell that mice have any great fear of snakes; perhaps they recognize that breeding counts for more than even the most sagacious of panics. I have an idea that mice regulate their own numbers to some extent, perhaps by simply ceasing to breed when very high densities are reached. What then, aside from a dearth of mice, regulates the number of snakes? With Maine winters that they can conquer only by avoiding them, I can imagine the answer to that!

Kathleen has settled-in marvelously well and is now chubby and tanned by the sun. She carries on conversations with the gulls, waves to lobstermen, upturns clustered clumps of snails on the tide rocks to see if "anybody is home," and glowers at the mounted head of Admiral Peary's musk ox—she likes the walrus but the musk ox has too much hair.

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7 August The gullery eider and her three young fed in very rough water today; they were absolutely unconcerned by waves that would have dashed our boat to splinters. One stormy night, a small raft of eiders started to slip into the lee of our cliffs. I got out the 'scope to count them and they shied away into the dark. There is no semi-domestication among these eiders of the sort so often prated about in Iceland! Nor should I trade my ducks for all of Iceland's eiderdowns.

8 August Red currants and red raspberries until we let them fall. I have no guilty feelings about their "waste." This is too much the physics and chemistry as well as the poetry of life for such vain regrets: they return to the soil they came from.

Lamb's-quarter is the most lush, succulent stuff that has ever been in the greens pot—I gladly put its salt-induced fleshiness against the proudest switch of tasteless spinach that a gardener ever babied along! But this poor soil took nearly six weeks to give us radishes.

I shall this day forget the poisons, fertilizers and exotics that men choose as their measures of husbandry. The herring gulls and I are loafing. Gulls have brought off their short-necked young, and now hang about, letting the tide bring in a harvest of crabs and other such grist to their mills. One gull soars up and drops an unfortunate crab onto the rocky beach below my window.

A fire in the fireplace that comforted us through the early morning hours is now popping and sizzling its driftwood last. Voles are gnawing down the last of the spinach that would never, anyway, have grown large enough to eat. I think maybe the wind is sweeping away the fog—and it may stir up waves enough that I shall not have to go to Harpswell until tomorrow. The gull has now brought the battered crab onto the porch; he will no doubt end by leaving its tattered remains in the drain to keep the cistern water fragrant.

But the present is never final; September first seems just around the corner.

There are days now when I see no seals at the Haskell rocks. Today we have gone to the gulls' end of the island and looked diligently all along the west coast. No seals. Just where do they go? They are neither here to seaward, nor between us and the mainland.

A few gulls still protest my presence at the gallery, but I saw only one couple of young still on land. The gulls, too, seem to have lives to lead that will perhaps take them far from their Eagle Island summer.

9 August I have not accomplished much in my island summer. As for seals, I now know more about the Maine coast than I did the first of June. That is something.

15 August Our island world is almost dominated by herring gulls; what could be more appropriate reading than Nikko Tinbergen's *Herring Gull's World*? The book has real meaning when gulls break into the quiet of the tide-worn night with their loud cries, with herring-gull babies being raised in the garden, and when clouds

of gulls rise screaming as invasion threatens their end of the island.

I realize that gulls tread down the tops of spruce trees—that the trees eventually die, from one cause or another (but I am not convinced that on this seaward island, they do not die anyway)—that they flavor our dishwater with the tag ends of their dinners. But there is joy when a gull bows in his dignity and falls into the ritualistic abandon of the jackass greeting-call, when the downy young (and some no longer downy) waddle for cover at a parent's warning, or when adult gulls drop crabs onto the beach to crack their exoskeletons.

19 August A young seal stopped by briefly today at high tide and in very rough water. I was able to watch it through the 'scope: a couple of magnificent views as it bucked the rolling water that dashed into the rocks. It planted its rear feet and took the waves head on, displaying a freedom in its element that did not need my admiration to demonstrate its perfection.



20 August There is never any silence, nothing even approaching it. The relative quiet of surging waters becomes at times the crash of rollers breaking against sheer cliffs of greenish slate, the wet sob of the water's retreat. Gulls, during the breeding season, would keep silence away in any case. And without either gulls or sea, wind soughs in the spruce tops and there is the bell-buoy's dong a mile or so off to the southeast, as if we kept cows in our pastures. Lobstermen, too, string their traps along the shores of the island, and their boats chug along, come fog or shine.

Anyway, I find that I do not avoid the noise by ignor-

ing it, by affecting auditory fatigue or by ordinary dullness: I begin to make sense just from what my ears bring to me. I enjoy the un-silence of the island.

Something that pleases me about this island is the almost eerie nature of light, out here in a little world that no town council cares to bless with a sodium glare. There is a sheen of light on the ocean any minute you care to look out; waves break perpetually into a halo of white foam at the foot of the cliffs below our bedroom window. A searchlight from a boat passing in the night cuts through the house with a painful solidity. Stars come through when the fog is not in; even the thinnest sliver of moon is felt almost as well as seen.

Aside from the charming desert of the sea, it is good: where else would one have touch-me-nots taller than the privy; fall warblers—their identity ever a challenge—hopping through evergreens below the level of the front porch; shore birds—plovers, peeps and turnstones—waltzing after sandhoppers in the backlash of the waves; and hundreds of clumps of Indian pipe like ghostly little sentries along the back trail under the spruces? And today, for the second time, a black guillemot in his drab winter dress sports in our bay.

*21 August* I have found Jacob Burckhardt's *Force and Freedom*—a fine indictment of the basic ideas of the revolutionary generations that plan to bring Utopia.

Now, I have my biases: I should never for a minute trade all the artifacts of Europe for the whooping crane or the great bustard or a bog. I believe that the true measure of Man is not his temples and political doctrines nor any of the philosophic systems; these are human characteristics perhaps, but all asides from the serious, and satisfying, business of the living man: getting food, finding room, living, loving, and dying.

Burckhardt's book is a disturbing one, but more for its unusual historical pessimism than in any coherent and ecological view of mankind on which I think a study of the tragedy of man ought to be focused. Its very viewpoint makes a hearty reliance on revealed religion necessary, or at least inevitable. But surely the miracle of Man's survival, if it comes, will be due not to revelation but to his own insight. What one wants is not codified, revealed pessimism but realism.

What frets me is all the talk about "culture," works of art, and our debt to the holy Greeks: the cluttering navel cords of the past, the preciousness of cathedrals and the uncertain trashiness of their builders, the snooty certainty that Dante is worth it all, the idolatry of Plato.

For all this business of the solidity of pessimistic and conservative religions in Europe (Burckhardt is long on this), religions still seem as man-made as a skyscraper and no more comforting.

*23 August* Our island offers the haven of a ship at sea to buzzing cicadas today: I heard them a few days ago in Harpswell.

A gift of the winds and the migratory urges of birds: an influx of birds occurred during the night. Thirteen

species are new this morning, or have returned after an absence of several days, so may be considered part of the "wave." (Four more new species appeared during the next two days. I identified a total of sixty-one species of birds on the island; of these, twenty species were seen during June; twenty-eight species were noted in July-nine new ones; forty-eight kinds were catalogued during August and the first two days of September—thirty-two of them new.)

*24 August* A gray day, charged with expectancies of some sort. A half-fulfillment bedevils me. The island has no use for me now, and, in many ways, I need to get back to Brunswick. If the island were mine, with years to weave into my labors, I should face it happily. There would be endless things to do. As it is, we must pack and yet, we must wait.

While cirrus clouds faded to the northeastward, whispering of storm, a blue mass of arched clouds closed in from the westward at sunset, cutting off the light, dimming the velvet skin of the sea. A wintry prospect palled the full tide churning below. Then, two birds flew in, landing among the gulls, sandpipers and ringed plovers. More turnstones, maybe?—my "calico birds" beloved from days in arctic Alaska when they sauntered on the beach like pigeons on a graveled driveway.

The thought of golden plovers thrust itself upon me. I do not know why, for light was poor and I have not seen a golden plover for six years. They turned out to be near-cousins—black-bellied plovers: the first ones I have ever seen.

There was, in the same dim light, a stir among small birds in the spruces by the porch. Our male redstart, semaphoring his magnificent tail and wings, searching out a last insect. A myrtle warbler, his signal colors differently distributed, but hardly less bright, than the redstart's, flitted through green branches.

Small-craft warnings are out, the radio says. I do not wonder: but black-bellied plovers at sunset . . . !

*25 August* We caught sight of a visiting adult male seal this morning. He behaved lethargically and we soon noticed that he had a horrible gash in his neck just below the angle of his right jaw. The wound is an ugly gape and there seems little chance of its healing. The animal is weak, but very alert.

A shot-gun blast might leave such a wound. Or do they fight, or get caught in fishermen's nets, or find themselves dashed into cutting rocks?

By midafternoon, there was so much fog I had to give up seal watching.

Small-craft warnings again. We have neither seen the sun nor had its shadow this day. Fog congeals gradually into rain.

*30 August* There are times, in my disgust with certain aspects of the human intellect, that I feel like saying: I do not deal with things of the imagination—I deal imaginatively with things. Unbridled imagination is

hard to pin down, and I am a little shy of anything so intimately tied to the social spitball.

I venture to say that public money comes eventually from soil or from ocean, always from energy sources and certain fixers of energy that are rich enough to prepare a surplus for us. Natural laws, operating to some extent through the imperfect smokescreen of the human condition, control the availability of that surplus. But I should fear a society that acted effectively to control the "waste" of that surplus energy. The totalitarian state can be reached through many roads sign-posted with innocence.

31 August A loon has fished in our bay. I spent hours of this day watching him. He always looks under water at least once before diving, pushing his bill and head under so that his eyes are barely below the surface. This is done six times sometimes before he finally dives, always after brief looks around above the surface. He

has two worlds to guard against; but are the quick submarine glances to ward off enemies—or to search out likely prey?

The badly wounded seal was here for a while this afternoon. He spent most of the time in deep, quiet water, like a buoy, with only his head showing, his nose straight to heaven and the wound held above water as if he were turning it into the rays of the sun.

Here on our island, the encircling sea surges on. Abounding life garlands its wave-laced shores. Such life is "free" so long as sun and tide are in happy conjunction. Death is an accident because it is unplanned. In a way, like divine blessing, life looks improbable, too.

Our island summer has had its uncertainties, its graces. We have dug clams, trapped fish, gathered skunk currants; we have watched sick gulls die and live ones soar; we have looked with new wonder upon the world.

•



## from a mountain peak

I

### The Communion

From the mountain-peak,  
A silent world;  
Distant rivers do not run,  
Roadstrips flow from fingers  
And across my brow  
Planes plow snow furrows  
Through fields blue.

This pulsing stillness  
And god-height  
Speak peace.

Stand.

Still.

Tall in the crackling sun,  
I feel my blood flow deep  
In this mountain's veins.  
What hidden heart between us  
Throbs thus fast?  
What caverns coiled and vast  
Encompass such community  
Of rock and man?

The stones grow hot beneath the sun;  
My hands grasp granite,  
Touch to the core—  
The liquid voltage shoots through arm to eye  
My head flung back  
Mouth open to the sky  
Oh god—how right that this should live  
And flow my body through the domed blue high—  
That this should live, and speak, and die.

Now, like some old, unsteady prophet I return;  
I hear earth's slow hum.  
The turbined caverns close to quail's pierced whistle—

Touched with this power, I could heal the sun.

II

### The Consecration

Here in the warmth of winter would I die,  
Rain pulling at my flesh  
Like children's fingers;  
From the last smiled farewell linger  
And turning, slow, draw up the earth about me  
Through the night.

TED WIMMER

## progress

This is a world of epitaphs:

Here lies a woman  
with more pride than reason;  
eyes somewhat blue, skin soft, a mind  
comparatively keen.  
Fond of herself, she mourned  
at the moment of dissolution,  
gave her hand with bad grace  
and left the room with a frown;  
having never really believed in the body and  
soul's division,  
having never believed in the body as  
separate from the soul.  
This is a world of epitaphs, and no one knows  
his own.

NANCY WESTLAKE

## celle qui meurt

Crécy and Agadir, the siege at Acre,  
the bridge at Poitiers, Novara, Saint-Mihiel;  
the interminable wet war in Flanders;  
the sluggish swarms of flies, the peacock cry  
of someone spitted suddenly; the thrust  
and plunge of rapine; laces torn  
and silver cups and spiky crowns of gold  
melted and puddled. In the marble snow,  
stiffened in stubborn attitudes, the dead  
resist interment in the frozen ground.

Death leaves the land  
clean as a crow-picked bone: scoured  
with salt and fire.

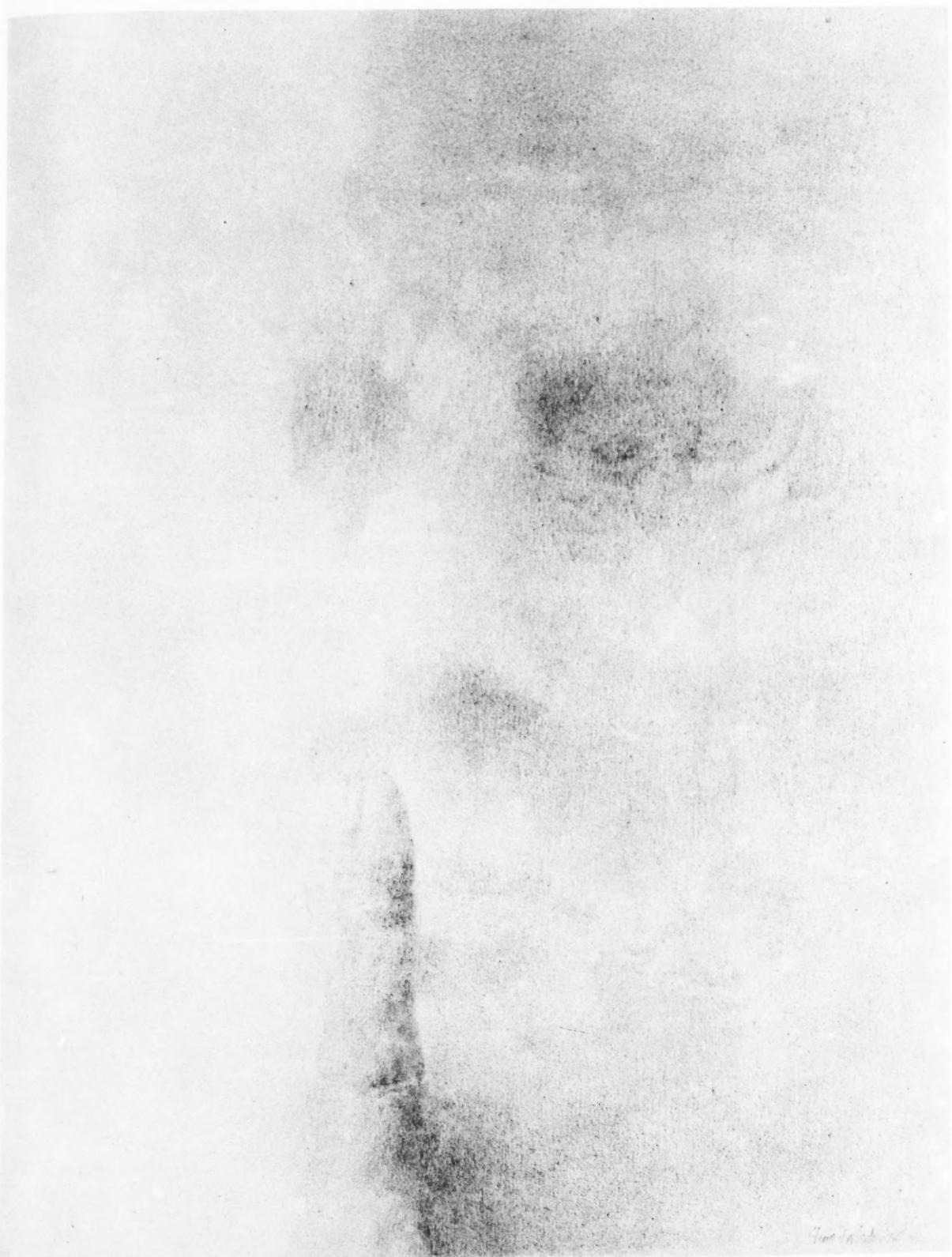
Housewifely Death  
complains because the work is never done  
and muddy feet track in the blood again.

Nous avons changé tout cela.  
Hirôshima.

NANCY WESTLAKE

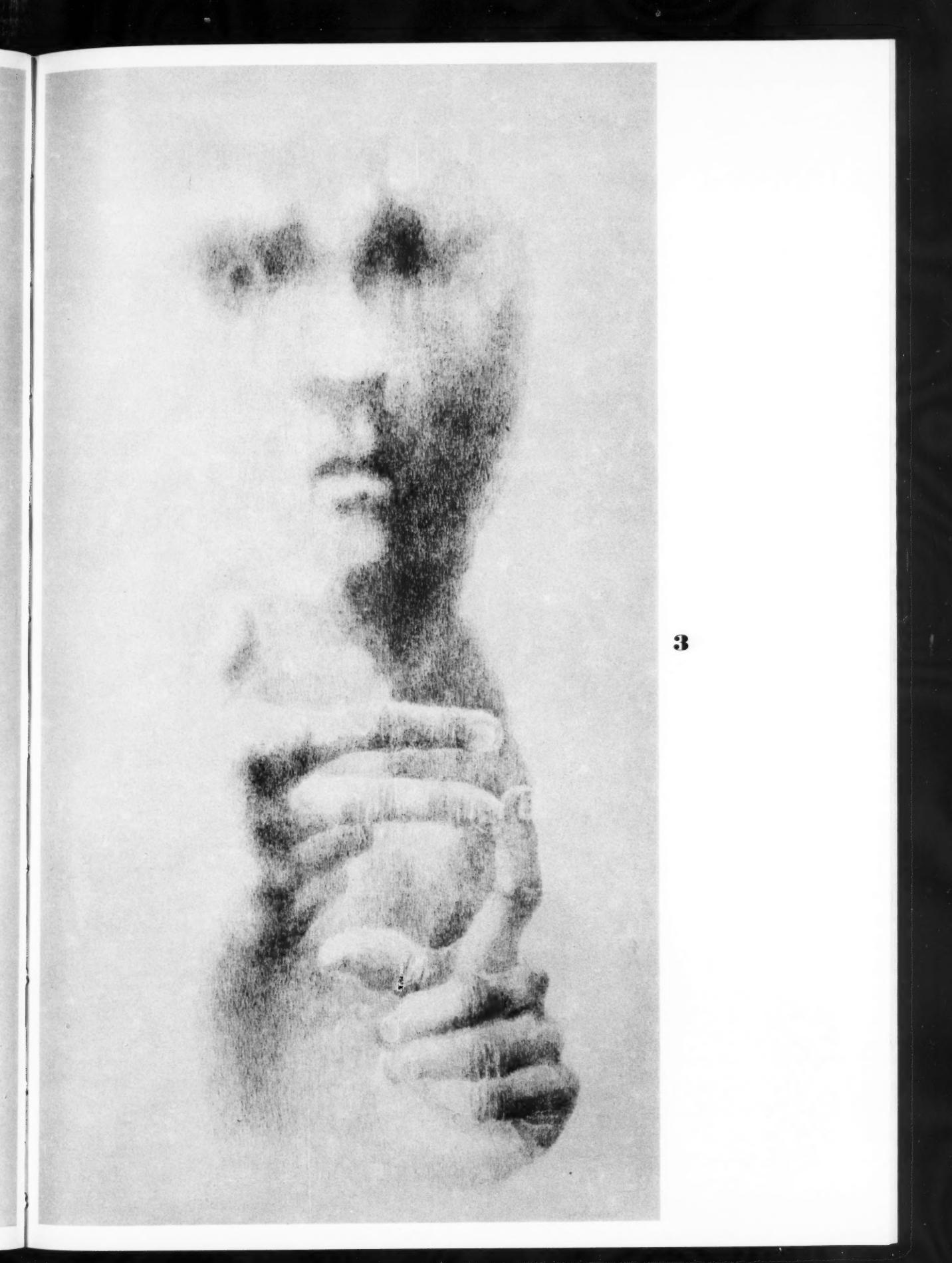
NUMBERS: A Portfolio of  
Drawings by Elias Friedensohn

I



**2**





3

4





**1/2 of 10**

6





Louise Bourgeois



Reproduction  
by Photostat



10







## **numbers**

These drawings are a selection from a series of twenty-eight  
that will be shown at the Feingarten Gallery,  
1018 Madison Avenue, New York City, November 6 through 24.

CONTACT/AUGUST

## ice shanties

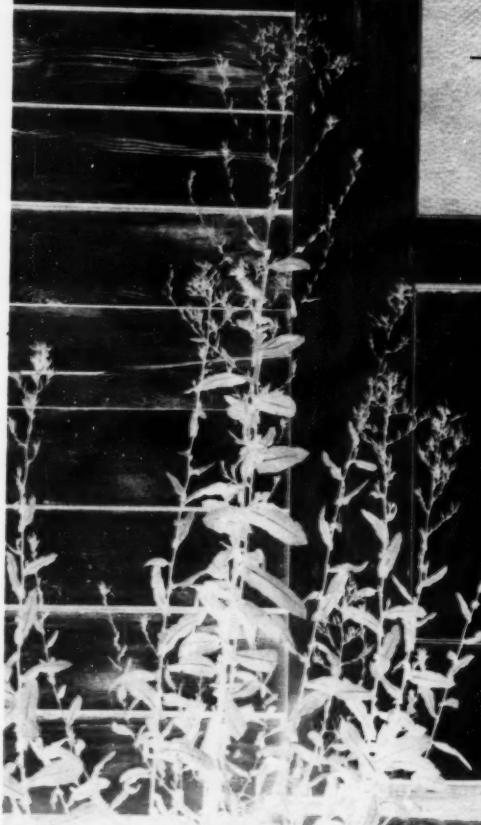
Homemade shacks dotting the circular waste  
Put up against the cold to shelter the catching of fish,  
Like outhouses moved there by the hand of man  
Or something the ice has raised to see itself:  
Inside the gaze rests on the hole at its feet  
Disappearing along the string that holds a worm  
at its end—  
About it are all the provisions it has taken  
for its occupation.  
The window through which it can see  
Those other lonely erections against the white;  
The chimney on the roof through which the stove rises,  
Trailing its breath like a banner against the sky;  
The flask on the shelf, the stool on which his body rests,  
The knife and fork inside a cup on a dish,  
And the headless fish lying open on a towel on the ice.  
Pictures of nudes or half-dressed beauties hang  
from the walls,  
A nail through the breast of one, the stomach  
of another—  
Above the lake the human wish contained in the warm  
coils of the self:  
Below the stove pipe, in the close damp of the fish-smell,  
The heat of body odor, his own sweat and breathing,  
With stains of blood about the cuffs of his slicker,  
He feels mounting within him the soft swells  
of his own will—  
His string in one hand, the other on his cod.

Under the ice, amid the blue that contains them,  
As if they were an extension of the medium  
in which they swim,  
The fish descend, or rise as slowly as do air bubbles;  
They are as much part of the element in which they  
move as the soul.  
The white of the ice above looks blue from below—  
The air-pockets pass like clouds in the heaven  
above them,  
And below is the brown of the earth; should they forget  
And rise too far in the light that surrounds them,  
They are admonished by the gentle pressure of the ice  
on their backs.  
They spend their life among the vegetation  
The earth puts up as tentacles that would grasp  
and hold them,  
For some purpose they only disclose to themselves;  
Blindly propelled in the endless round of their existence,  
Feeding on other fish—particles of their own elimination,  
Bits of food and debris from those voyages that  
pass above them,  
Decayed matter left in the lake by the summer,  
They move always toward that bait stiffening  
on the hook  
Bobbing in the dance of its attachment inside the shack—  
Spun along its length the wake of nodding dream  
Like a wreath laid on the sweating hams on the stool—  
With the string in its hands, the whole human enterprise  
Squatting above the hole it fishes through.

THEODORE HOLMES

*I am  
a  
pilgrim  
ε  
I come  
in  
peace*

*by  
Calvin  
Kentfield*



**HOW TO BEGIN.** Or how to end, for that matter, but I'll face the end when I come to it. I've always been like that, and though many of the things that I've always thought I was have turned out to be hollow illusions, I believe I'll remain (at least till I'm forty) short-sighted and improvident. So if you're unwilling to read and expect nothing—to come to no conclusion, to achieve no useful truths—stop now, put this book down and pick up another one whose first paragraph promises more for your money.

First of all I'll tell you who I am, and then, dutifully, I'll tell you a hair-raising tale out of my childhood to show you what a time I had and to help you to forgive me for some of the things I did when I grew up. I'm Tom McKinley (Thomas Olney McKinley), but I'm not your cousin, whether you be an Olney or a McKinley. I'm nobody's relation. The initials of my name are T.O.M. and that's who I am. I'm Tom. My parents are not dead, though they might as well be for all they mean to me. The McKinleys came from Lord knows where and will probably vanish to the same place because I'll be the only male left in the family when my father dies, and the last thing I want to introduce into this spooky world is a flock of kids.

So you've read almost a page now. If you're tired of reading about people like me, if you want to read about somebody more like yourself with a thought-out family and a budgeted home and a sense of uplook and outlook and responsibility to your country and your kind, and a bright future, then, again, I say, don't waste your money; it's hard to come by and a book you buy at the prices these days, you should get your money's worth of what you want. Don't take a chance. Buy records. There's a great stereo album out with a hundred violins playing music for all occasions, and there's one with Toscanini's Fifth on one side and Leonard Amber on the other telling you how to listen to it and what Beethoven was saying when the symphony was in his name.

So I'm turning thirty-five years of age, which, give or take a few years on the natural length of a man's life, you might call the middle or the fold—if his life is a book—or some kind of equinox, though it seems to me I've got a lot farther to go than I've come so far.

I'm with the Fish and Game now, here in San Francisco, the California Department of Fish and Game. I work out of Sausalito on the patrol boat. It's a civil service job, and technically, I'm a deck hand, but I function as a mate. We patrol the coast from here to Oregon keeping an eye on the commercial fishermen and terrorizing the sportsmen who have taken too many or poach out of season. But it's a good job. It pays next to nothing, but I believe in Fish and Game, and it gives me a chance to read all I want and to write this book and to write a little poetry, which I've been doing recently for my own amusement to uncover the hidden parts of my soul. I think a man ought to do that, one way or another, some time or other before he's dead.

When the body of this story takes place, I was twenty-six, so if I sound young to you it's because I'm thinking back, and because of my unchecked enthusiasm for Life

and Living and Love and Sex and Movies and Music and Water and Air and Fire and Stone and Booze and Women and Boats and Friends and Automobiles before 1950 when there was something solid under the hood. If this sounds contradictory to what I have just said a couple of pages back, it's because that's what I am, a contradiction, and so are you, too, if you're an American and not a hypocrite, if you've ever taken the trouble to find out who you are. At my age, I should by all standards be settling down and shaping up, but so should the United States of America, and it's not, so what do you think I am, subversive or something?

I come from Brigham's Crossing, Iowa, so I'm that kind of small-town, white, non-Jewish, non-Italian, non-Mexican, non-Armenian, non-Catholic, English-Irish, corny American—archetype Big Ten (six-feet-two), only I'm not quite that kind as you'll see if you stick with this chronicle page by page.

Brigham's Crossing is on the Mississippi River right at that bend when Brigham Young, on a frigid night back in 1846, led his Mormons across the ice and then across the plains and the mountains to Zion. How many of us could do that today, even if we wanted to? How many of you in Cincinnati or Chattahoochee or the Bronx ever even heard of Brigham Young?

Brigham's Crossing's not much of a town. It's a pretty place with a Rock Island depot and freight house right by the river and a number of big old white frame houses and hundreds of trees. It's the trees that I remember, because, like Fish and Game, I believe in Trees.

There was a good tavern down by the ferry landing with cowboy music on Saturday night and a couple of whores name of Velma and Henrietta if anybody wanted them. The ferry stopped running across the river to Nauvoo, where Brigham and his apostles came from, when I was about fourteen, just before the war, the Second World War (1941–1945), which put an end to a lot of things including my college education. I don't know why, but I skipped kindergarten, so I was a year younger than all the others in my class. I started out at the University of Iowa when I was sixteen and two years later I joined the merchant marine. But before I get too far ahead, I want to tell you that hair-raising story about my childhood.

My father was an Olney, or so we thought for a long, long time. On his mother's side. Either the Olneys were on the *Mayflower* or they weren't, I don't know, but they were there at the birth of our nation whether or not they had a hand, so to speak, in its conception. There's an Olney town in England in Bucks and there's an Olney, Texas; an Olney, Oregon; an Olney, Montana; an Olney, Illinois; and an Olney Springs, Colorado. My mother found all this out because she wanted to be a D.A.R. How she could become a D.A.R. when her maiden name was Sweeney, I don't know, but she tried to do it through my father's side. There were only three D.A.R.'s in Brigham's Crossing and one of them was the wife of the only banker in town, a fellow name of Quail, a nice enough man who just happened to become a banker because he had been born outside of town on a farm full

of hay and ragweed and had grown up allergic to everything but money. Everybody knew him and called him Bob White and I was almost grown before I realized his name was really Quail. But his wife was something else again. She was D.A.R. and Anglican. There weren't any others of that persuasion in town except the other two D.A.R.'s, so there was no proper house of worship. Every Sunday Bob White drove the three ladies to the county seat fifteen miles away to satisfy their weekly thirst for the Holy Spirit. He went to the Baptist himself, and they met after services and drove back. In the days that I remember, he had a Pierce Arrow, and that was what my mother wanted. I know it sounds awfully simple to say a thing like that, but as I look back, I realize that my mother was, in fact, rather simple and all she really wanted was to be Anglican, D.A.R., and ride to church in the back seat of a Pierce Arrow. There's something touching in such simple desires, and in spite of all the trouble she caused me out of ignorance and selfish concern, I look back with a certain tenderness on that simplicity. She caused my father an awful lot of trouble, too; in fact, I don't see how he stood it all those years, particularly during that terrible winter of 1936. I don't know if you've ever spent a dirty winter in Iowa, but I can tell you it can be grim. And in the depth of the Depression it was grimmer than anything this golden country had ever seen. There was no money and no work and no coal. It was so cold that the schools were closed half of the time. Eighteen, twenty, twenty-two below. The sun never shone through the clouds; it cast a kind of dead gray glow that passed for day and then went out altogether at half past three in the afternoon. The wind blew off the river and we closed up all of the house except the kitchen because we couldn't afford the fuel. We slept in the cold bedrooms upstairs and my mother hung the washing over the cookstove in the kitchen to dry. Christmas was a time without presents and a chicken instead of a turkey. During the holiday season tramps knocked at the back door two or three times a day on their way across the frozen, poverty-stricken face of this crazy George Washington-Abraham Lincoln land. My mother never refused them if she had a crust or a bone, and I give her credit for a kind heart—which is a rare possession at any time, feast or famine, crisis or not. We were better off than most; my father had a job, which was more than many men with families had. And my mother owned the house. She got it from her father, and that, as she rightly said, was a blessing.

She was a good deal older than my father, and I realize now that that winter, when I was nearly eleven, she was entering her menopause. Life and fortune had sped away like an arrow and all she had was one lonesome kid and a husband who, though still young and capable of most any accomplishment and descended from an old illustrious family, didn't give a damn.

"What's to become of us?" I can remember her saying over and over again. "What's to become of Tom?" She meant me. My father's name was Tom, too, but she always called him Mr. McKinley. Downtown and in church and on the telephone, it was Mr. McKinley this

and Mr. McKinley that and the poor son-of-a-bitch did nothing but work in the Rock Island freight house.

"Phyllis, I'm Tom," he'd say in despair. "I'm just Tom."

But she wouldn't take that. In her mind she had him descended from the olden kings of England, and that grim winter, through him, she essayed the D.A.R.'s. It was a terrible mistake. Not only did she spend all of her savings on exhuming my father's ancestors, she discovered that he had a dark strain of Mandan blood by way of a marriage, which, to her, was an indiscretion, committed by a forebear who had been a trapper in the Northwest Territory. It accounted for the face my father had, and it accounts for my deep-socketed skull that lies under the Celtic blue-eyed rustiness of my head like the shadow of an aspen on the floor of a stream. I'm not handsome, you understand, except in a craggy way, but I'm tall and agile, well-muscled and well-appointed, like my father was. I can remember, as a boy, seeing him naked in the bathroom and wondering if my little rubber-end stub of a pencil would ever grow to such magnificence, hang with such proud assurance, and eject such a powerful rackety stream of water. And I wondered if the smooth and womanly skin on my chest and between my legs would ever sprout such luxuriant manly thicket as my father's did. Well, it did, and though I realize his body was no more an accomplishment of his than mine is of mine, I thank him for it and for having made me in his image.

How he did this is a story I perhaps shouldn't tell, though I will, because this is tell-all and my father told me that winter when I was nearly eleven, though it wasn't until later when I began to have strange wet exquisite dreams or to wake up in the morning with my blankets risen over my belly like a new volcano that I really understood what he was talking about.

It's not a pretty story, so skip it if you like. Its only point is to illuminate some of the troubles we had, the three of us, from the very beginning when I was nothing but a hot, compulsive instinct in my father's glands.

The cemetery at Brigham's Crossing is lovelier than a park and a better place to have a picnic. You can gather hickory nuts there and black walnuts and hazel nuts and buckeyes. There is a wide stream overshadowed by willow trees, and on its banks are two little graves in the shadow of the Sweeney stone. These graves contain what little, if anything, remains of my brother and sister, who, had they not sputtered and died at birth like two hopeful little flames struck in the wind, would have taken some of the pressure off me.

After the second baby died, my father told me, my mother became morose and moody. Times were good and everybody was making money except my father, who muscled freight on and off trains for nothing a week as if he couldn't care less if he got ahead.

Failure is second in the order of American crimes; lack of ambition is first, the prime transgression; and the deaths of her children fused in my mother's mind with my father's contentment with his nothing a week and his Model T. What good was he to her when he could

give her nothing? She took to sleeping in the spare bedroom and locking her door at night.

My father was a vigorous man, as I am, with strong desires, but unlike me, he could never have taken another woman on the side. I think that was foolish of him, but who am I to judge. Times have changed, and besides, if he had I would never have been here at all. I was made out of a wild and desperate passion that broke down the door she had closed against him. When he told me this, my father doubled his fist and made a powerful erection of his forearm to illustrate the strength and awe of his desire.

"That's where you come from, boy," he said while his arm quivered with tension. "I was *bustin'*. You know what I mean?"

Of course I didn't know then, but the story certainly held my interest.

I conclude from what he told me that the next nine months constituted the most horrendous, hysterical pregnancy that any man and woman trapped by the fruits of lust ever endured; but when I finally emerged, I was, as the saying goes, too mean to die. My father described the look on my face when he first saw me, and I compared it to the way he had felt when he knocked down the door and went in. Determined was the word he used.

Immediately I became the bone of contention; and if I had not been as tough as I was and as determined to survive, I would have been devoured by one greedy dog or the other. I feel no twinges of disrespect in referring to my parents as dogs, partly because it's merely a figure of speech and partly because dogs are what they were in many ways. Loneliness and chagrin, and no equipment, no vision to understand their nature. Terrible. Pathetic. Pathos is something I can't bear. Tragedy I can shoulder by fitting it into the ultimate order of things, but pathos tears me to shreds. My heart breaks over lonely people who have no insight into their loneliness and no knowledge of how to salve it, and over people who are abused and over children, my God, children, hurt, perplexed and lonely—I can't stand it. I want to say, come, come to me. I'm warm and strong and safe. I'm a cellar under the wind; stand behind me, the arrows that will kill you will splinter against my breast. And this is wrong, I know. The lonely are lonely out of their own inadequacy or intransigent ignorance, the abused invite their own abuse, children cannot be sheltered from the terrors of the world and the imminence of death, but—Ah, but. So you see the contradictions in me. When I was nearly eleven, that dreadful winter, I felt that way about my mother. When she was biting her nails and moving about her miserable chores with tears imminent always in her eyes, with Ma Perkins and Mary Noble and Our Gal Sunday on the radio, my boyish guts churned with the frustration of being powerless to help, yet my incipient manhood demanded that I shield this sad, sad woman. And my father. I was only a boy, how could I help a grown man? What I didn't realize was that neither one of them gave a drizzly shit about me. If they fought for me, over me, it was not that they wanted me, it was that each of them wanted to deprive the other of me. In the worst and

most destructive sense, they were in love.

Their arena was the supper table in that icebound kitchen. And I'll never forget the battle that took place the day my mother, in her frantic, foolish, and costly investigations into my father's lineage, discovered that he was not an Olney after all. It had all been some county recorder's mistake. The original maternal name had been O'Ney, which made him just another shanty Sweeney.

My father came home from work that night, washed his face and hands at the kitchen sink, and sat down without a word, hair still wet at the front, sleeves rolled up, his white, bulging arms heavy, yet loose, on the kitchen table, one on each side of his waiting plate. As much as I have worked, as hard work as I have done for as long a time as I have done it, I have never developed arms like his. He must be sixty-five now and I'll bet he could put me down in a second. I always thought how unfortunate it was that he didn't have some of that fine strength in his head or at least in his character.

I was at the other side of the table, hunched, as was my custom at that time, over my plate, waiting for the nightly encounter. I had listened to Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy, and the Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen, and Little Orphan Annie, and the Lone Ranger didn't come on until seven. So this was intermission, when He and She, the clowns, came on.

She stepped from the stove to the table, the frying pan full of scrap bacon, and hard eggs, hot, sputtering, and dangerous in her hand.

"You want to know something, I'll tell you," She said, "Your mother was no Olney. Your mother was no Olney from the olden kings of England."

He looked up at the red eyes, the quivering lips, the quaking skillet.

"Are you going to give me my supper, or are you going to stand there like a dumb bunny and let—"

"I know, I know, I'm a dumb bunny to you, I always—"

"I didn't say you were a dumb bunny, I said *like* a dumb—"

"Well I may be a dumb bunny but I'm no cheat, I'm no crooked—I'm no—"

"Phyllis, give me my supper, I'm hungry."

She then dished out the bacon and eggs, dripping with grease, onto his plate, then she tended to me. Her own supper was waiting on the stove in a pie pan and she would, when she got to it, eat it standing.

"Now what do you mean saying Mother was no Olney; you know damn well she was."

"No she wasn't. It came today. Her name was O'Ney. O, apostrophe, capital N, e, y. And I think you knew it all along."

He bellowed with laughter. "Well, I'll be damned," He said, finally calming down, "Where in the Sam Hill did you dig that up, Phyllis, out of your catalogs?"

"You knew all about it, *didn't* you?"

"You hard of hearing or something? I just now said I didn't know nothing about it. It's pretty God-damned funny, it seems to me. Christalmighty, I wonder what Mother would have to say if she was alive?"

"I don't see anything funny about it. I see it for what it is, an outright, two-faced—"

"What's the matter with you lately, Phyllis? You seem to of taken leave of your common sense. You've lived with me, well, it seems like a hundred years, but I know it *couldn't* of been that long."

I interjected a small laugh at my father's joke, and was, fortunately, unheard.

"Whatever your mail-order genialologists say," He went on, "my middle name's been Olney all my life, and that's the way it's going to stay."

"I see it as a deliberate falsehood."

"Anyway, who are you in the Sam Hill to— Come on, you'll make me mad. Sit down and eat your supper."

"If it seems like such a long time to *you*—"

"Phyllis, stop being such a dumb bunny over something that don't matter a good God damn anyway."

"Doesn't *matter*? How—"

"Mom, why don't you sit down and eat your supper?" I said.

"All these years I scrimp and save, I work like a nigger to make both ends meet, and you, you— What's going to become of us? What's going to become of Tom, my only son, when it comes time for him to go away to school and meet people and try to make something out of himself—"

"Didn't you make any cornbread, Mom?" I said, knowing that she had, and that, at that moment, it was charring, forgotten, in the oven. Before my remark had a chance to seep into her troubled brain, I sprang to the oven door, and in an instant, the steamy kitchen was full of smoke.

An involuntary little cry, a high-pitched gasp engendered by surprise escaped from her, revealing her vulnerability and showing him the momentary weakness of her defenses.

"Oh, for Christal*mighty*," He roared, leaping from his chair. But her recovery was instantaneous. She whipped the flat pan of blackened bread out of the oven before He could get past the table, and with that as one weapon and her ready tongue as another She beat her opponent back to his chair, saying, "It's you, it's you, it's you," taunting him with the smoking mess as if it were a firebrand and She were keeping a slavering wolf at bay.

"Me?" He snarled. "What—"

"You make me so *nervous*, you get me so on edge, I, I—"

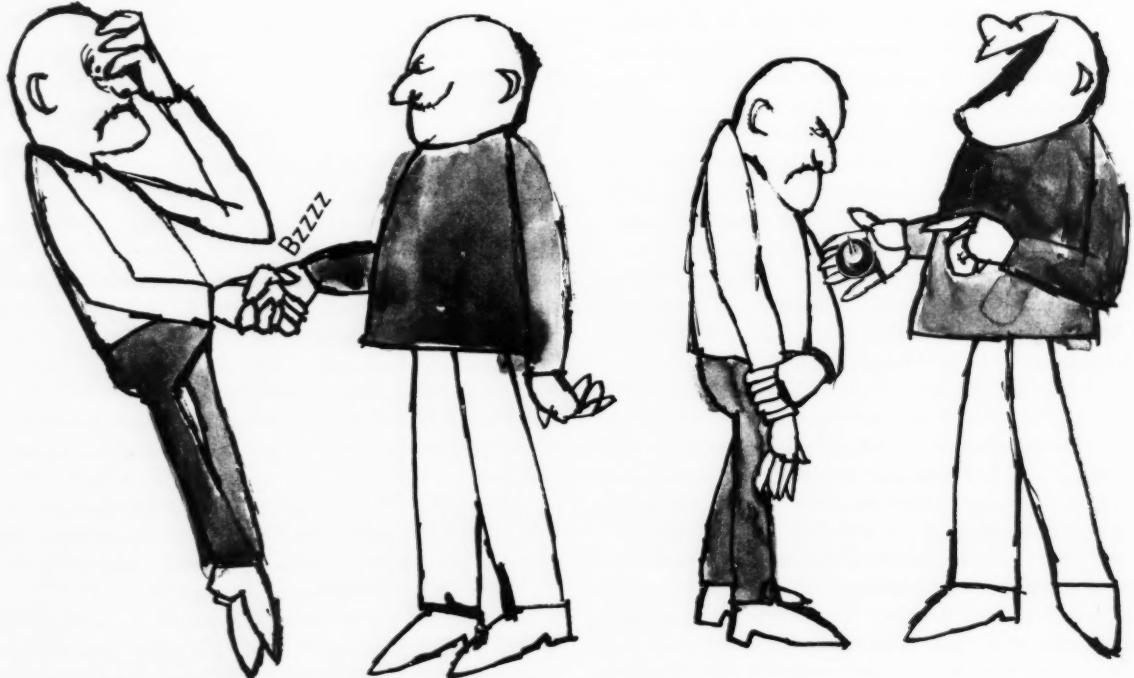
"Why don't you give me some of that cornbread, Mom," I said. "I like it burnt, I really do. I like it like that." I might just as well have spoken to Jesus in heaven for all the mind she paid me.

"Get that thing out of my face," He demanded, "and tell me like a 'uman bing what in the name of Sam Hill you're bitching about."

She turned back to the cookstove and slammed the pan on top of the oven, whirling again, instantly, with a new attack.

"And I'll please thank you to stop committing oaths in front of my child," She said, with high dignity.

I really wanted some of that cornbread, I wasn't kidding when I said I liked it that way. Quickly, furtively, like a cockroach, I darted from my chair to the stove, retrieving the pan, and back to the table where I began to sate my perverted appetite for charred crust



while my father, having fallen back amazed into his chair, said:

"Oh Christalmighty, Phyllis, Christalmighty, *our* child is a boy, and *my* son— You haven't forgotten how hard I had to work to get that boy out of you—"

"Mr. McKinley!" She cried, and He roared again with laughter, while I, like a mouse at a wedding feast, nibbled speedily away at the cornbread, washing it down with huge gulps of milk.

"And no son of mine has ears too delicate for a few cuss words," He said quietly. I think he would have been willing, then, to let the whole thing go if my mother had kept silent long enough for him to change the subject, but she didn't—she came right back at him with, "You ought to be *ashamed!*" and at that, my father blew up.

"*Ashamed?*" He cried. "The hell I should be ashamed. I should be ashamed I ever got hooked by a bitch like you, *that's* how I should be ashamed."

That stopped her. He had never gone that far before. Seizing his instant of advantage, He leapt from his chair. "And what's more, what he learns, *I'll* learn him." He turned to me while my mother, speechless for once, looked on in astonishment that changed, when she realized what was taking place, to horror.

"Tommy-boy," my father said in a companionable tone, "say what I say, right after me."

Abandoning my mess of cornbread, I attended my father and nodded that I would obey. I wiped the crumbs from my lips in preparation.

"God damn," my father said.

My face grew red with a confusion of embarrassment

and pride, but as in the responsive reading in Sunday church, I repeated:

"God damn."

I looked quickly, then, from my father to my mother to see what action She would take. Always before, when She had caught me swearing, She had punished me or had said what a terrible reflection it was upon her to have a dirty-minded son. "What will people think of me?" was nearly as common a remark of hers as "What will become of us?"

I suppose I looked defiant, I don't know. I should have; I had such powerful and unexpected protection.

"Say Jee-zuss Christ," my father said.

I spoke right up. "Jesus Christ," I said.

"Christalmighty."

"Christalmighty."

My father looked at my mother and glared triumphantly. Turning back to me, He said, "Them's the kind of cusswords that comes under blasphemy, and you'll find them very useful in later life. Say them again so they'll stick in your mind."

"God damn, Jesus Christ, Christalmighty," I said, quickly and dutifully.

"That's good, Tommy-boy, them's good words to know, only them are just beginning ones. I'll teach you some real dandies when you grow up old enough to know what they mean."

"O.K.," I said.

"Thomas McKinley," She said. "You're a *sinful* man, you ought to be *ashamed!*"

My father glared at her, then He looked at me with a look I will never forget, a look as cruelly calm and full



of complicity as the voice He used when He said:

"Only here's a *keen* one you can have the use of here and now." He glanced again at her as much as to say, All right, listen to this. Looking her straight in the eyes, He said to me, "Tom, say son-of-a-bitch!"

I saw tears spring to my mother's eyes as She broke from my father's stare and looked at me; and in my heart, I felt my boyish pride in a man's world give way to fear.

"Speak up, boy," my father said, "say son-of-a-bitch."

I hung my head. I remember staring at the chipped blue oilcloth that covered the table and the crumbs of cornbread that littered that sea like brown and golden islands; and I wanted to be away, gone, out of that snow-bound tomb of spiteful love. I knew a few things, I was almost eleven years old. I knew what a bitch was, and I saw, then, how little my father cared for me; I saw what his spite was prodding him to do.

"I can't," I said, and so swallowed the words that even I could hardly hear, but He, my father, heard me. "You can't say bitch, boy? Sure you can."

I was desolate. My face burnt. My sinuses felt singed with the heat of rising tears, but I'd be damned if I would cry. He laid his heavy, huge hand on my shoulder and I shook my head.

My mother began to sob. She tried to put her arms around me, but I broke free. I sprang from my chair, leaving them both, and dashed out the kitchen door to the back porch where the icy February air froze at the bottom of my heart those tears which I had refused to let rise to my eyes.

Neither of them came after me, though I was without coat or sweater or cap. I could hear them arguing still, and the word spite coming deep and dangerous from my father and outraged and shrill from my mother. Across the alley the light burnt in the Ulrichs' kitchen. My friend Ears lived there, and he was having his supper too. I shoved my hands into the pockets of my cords and shivered in my shirt sleeves. Then I was aware of another presence, another breathing human coming toward me from the darkness of the back yard, breathing steam from its nostrils like a horse in a stable. It crossed the island our kitchen light made on the snow and I saw it was a tramp. I was not afraid of tramps, there had been so many. And I was especially without fear that night for I realize, now, that I recognized another outcast.

"What'd you want?" I said roughly.

"Is you man of the house?" the shivering figure said, coming closer. "Or is you the junior? Oh, I can see now, you's the junior. Had your supper?"

"I had my supper. You had yours?" I said defiantly.

"Don't be tough, kid. Things is tough enough without kids being tough to their elders. You'd be fourteen, I 'spect. Would you?"

"I'm twelve, I'm big for my age."

"You're sure a big fella for twelve. You say you had your supper? Would you say there was a crust left for a poor starving tramp like me?"

"There's cornbread," I said, "if you fancy it burnt to damnation."

"I fancy cornbread any way you got it," the tramp said. "Would you ask the lady of the house—"

"You mean my mom."

"That's right, son, I mean your mom."

"I'm not your son neither."

"It's just a way of talking when a man's talking to a boy; I don't mean nothing by it. Ask your mom, would you?"

"Ask her yourself, she's right in there." I flung open the door to the hot kitchen, and almost shoved the tramp inside. He and She were still standing, flushed and glaring at each other, and they faced the tramp as he stepped hesitantly inside, pulling his ragged stocking cap from his head and shuffling immediately to the gunny sack beside the door to wipe his feet.

"He says he's hungry," I said, still on the porch.

I was behind the tramp, but I could see my mother look the stranger up and down, and finally, I heard her say, "Yes, all right, come on in. We sure don't have much, but—"

The tramp stepped into the kitchen, and I let the door close behind him. I took off across the back yard, following the path of light the Ulrichs' kitchen window laid across the snow. I didn't have to see with my eyes what would happen in the kitchen, I knew. I knew the tramp would sit in my place, finish off the cornbread I had left, drink the coffee I would have drunk if I had stayed.

This tale goes on. My father escaped that night to the freight house where he and his cronies—affirmed bachelors, widowers, badgered husbands—frequently convened upstairs by a pot-bellied stove at a round bare table under a green-shaded light, spending the few hours of an evening in unspoken, though sympathetic, communion at bridge. They sat in the depot in captain's chairs, smoked cigars, drank beer, sent brown projectiles from their lips into a brass spittoon, and nobody ever took off his hat. I had been there many many a time, in the corner in a chair, listening to the occasional dry remarks that one or another of them made, dropping off to sleep sometimes to the monotonous falling of rain outside, or the steady crackling of the fire in the belly of the stove, or the unwavering fall of light on the table top, the fall of cards, the bidding, the ticking of the huge clock on the wall that timed the trains, the howling of the wind across the river, the shrieking of air imprisoned like a beast beneath the river ice. "O.K., Tom," my father would say. "Game's over, let's go home," and I would rouse myself and look at the clock. It would never be past ten, and we would wait for three, five, or ten minutes for the night passenger to St. Louis to roar past echoing across the river and dying away around the bend.

And that night, after my father had escaped, my mother did her dishes quickly in a state of high tension. When she had finished, she headed straight for her telephone, which was her doctor, her priest, and her addiction. Breathing heavily and rubbing her eyes until they

blazed, she sank into her morris chair in her confessional corner of the enormous kitchen and sat for several minutes unable to think whom to call that cold, unhappy night. Mabel was away and Ruby was sick and Elsie was having her circle. There was old Mrs. Lacey across from the cemetery half a mile away, but she had no telephone and my mother's old black coat was too thin to turn back the blast of such a fearful night. Seven winters had passed without enough money for a new one. Nothing ever came her way. And my father, ah, my father, who did nothing but try to turn me, all she had in the world, against her and teach me wicked ways.

I have seen this, and heard this all spoken out a hundred times. I have seen her sit, absolutely unconscious of my presence in the kitchen—chewing her little fingernail, wondering aloud whom to call. More often than not, someone would call her while she sat there. Someone like Ruth, whose husband never came home until he was drunk at midnight. It was Ruth she was talking to when I brought Ears back with me that night to play pick-up-sticks in the frigid parlor. For an hour and a half, I could hear my mother's voice beyond the door speaking of Mabel and Elsie and Ruby and others that she and Ruth knew, but not once speaking of herself, yet confessing herself all the same, delivering up her miseries into Ruth's ear through other people's troubles, exactly as the men were doing at their round ritual table, shuffling resentment and dealing out chagrin thirteen cards at a time, anointing the lacerated skins of their souls with two hearts and three spades and not a word of open complaint.

So the evening passed.

Ears and I played quietly, speaking in whispers for a long time so my mother wouldn't know we were there, but after a while we grew restless and began to wrestle, though I had been told and time again not to rough-house in the parlor. This disobedience brought on the disaster, for we did the worst of all possible things; we knocked over the lamp my mother had won in a raffle at church. It had been the Grand Prize and the only thing that had ever come to her free by the channels of good fortune. Indirect lighting had just come in, and under the pleated silk shade—still encased in its cellophane wrapping—a bowl of milky glass made a nest for a huge three-way bulb.

Ears and I watched in frozen horror as all this tipped in a slow and petrifying arc to the living-room rug, shattering with the force of a quarry blast, shooting blue fire, then plunging the room into rigid darkness. For a moment neither of us breathed, and during that black, frozen silence we heard my mother say to Ruth, "I'll call you back. No, no, it's all right, I'll call you back," and we heard the receiver click and the struggles of my mother raising her ponderous body from the deep chair, and then I heard the front door open and slam and I knew that Ears had fled and I was alone in the darkness. I sat there unmoving, while my mother's heavy tread crossed the kitchen. I heard the weather-sealed door open and heard my mother gasp as the icy air of the parlor hit her. And I waited for the ceiling light, which,

when it came, struck me like a blow, exposing me and my crime—both white as death, like something spilled or thrown-up on the rug.

My mother stood at the door almost as if she dared not come into the room. "I knew it, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it," she said, her lips barely moving as if she were muttering some perfunctory penance or redemption prayer. Her head moved slowly from side to side as if, at the same time, she were trying to deny what she was seeing with her tearful eyes. "Your father's son," she said with such infinite despair and hopelessness that tears of sorrow rose to my own eyes as, for a second, I shared her monumental disappointment in me. "Your father—" She rubbed her eyes, and rubbed them and I fought back my tears and tried to summon my defenses, which were pitifully small against such towering authority. It was only a lamp—I say now—but not then, not then—

And not to her. It was no plain lamp to her. With times so hard, with her age upon her, the ruined lamp was all she had ever received without the exigency of toil. It was luck come her way, it was opulence having sought her out, it was distinction.

She stood, coughing up involuntary sobs, and in a final gesture she drew her hand to her mouth with a sudden gasp as if to stifle a scream, then she crossed the room to the coat closet by the hall door, shunning me and my mess on the rug as a passerby shuns a drunk on the sidewalk or a crushed dog in the street.

I didn't move. I didn't speak. I watched her take her old black coat from the closet and put it on. I watched her cover her head with an old black-felt cloche, years out of style, and I heard her say, more to herself than to me, "I'll have to go. I'll have to. I can't"—and she broke off in another gasp.

But she stood there by the front door, staring at it, waiting, staring toward the black, frigid night outside as if she were staring through the fluted glass to the shrieking ice-bound river, saying, now directly, pointedly to me, "I'll have to go."

I shook. I was far from tears; I remember shaking not with cold but with simple fright, because I knew what she meant. She had threatened before—to go, to leave us, to finish her life at the bottom of the river, but I never knew—nor did my father—whether she had ever really meant it.

"I'll have to go," she said again, this time making the words a cold-blooded challenge to me.

"Where?" I said.

"I don't know." Her eyes shot upward and she cried, "To the river, Oh, I don't know. To the river."

And maybe she would have; I don't know. I saw her pitiful black shape crossing the treacherous ice, the howling wind whipping the skirts of her coat, a crack, a gash of open water—I leapt to my feet as her great black body moved toward the door. I threw my arms around her bitter coat; I buried my head in her heaving breast, and I cried, "Don't go, I'll be good, I promise! Mama, don't go, I'll be good!"

If my father had only been there to take that burden

on himself. I was a boy and he was a man, and He and She had made me—

"I...I don't know," she said. "You all, you, your father, you...I don't know."

"I promise, I promise," I cried, "I'll be *good!*" I soaked the threadbare cloth with my tears, I quivered at her bosom, then I released her and plunged into the ruin on the carpet, recklessly seizing the broken glass and making a pile of it while my mother watched. Her eyes were glassy, but they no longer wept. I looked up at her once and saw that she was staring at the blood flowing from my fingers, from me, the only child of hers that had lived. And at last, when both my hands were slashed and my blood had spread to the knees of my cords and the sleeves of my shirt, she said in a friendly and practical tone, "Wait just a minute, son. Let me get the broom."

Like a woman coming in to clean, she took off her coat but not her hat. Then, methodically, she sought the broom in the kitchen, returned, and swept away the evidence of my guilt and my father's guilt within me, and dumped it in the trash can. Then she tended the wounds I had suffered for her; and put me to bed.

No child should ever be forced to immolate himself to save a parent from self-destruction, but I can't blame my father now, for having sought his escape and left me to my trial. There would have been no trial if he had been there—not for him. The trial was for me and it's mine alone, and the burden of my crucifixion is mine.

I blamed him then, I now admit. I lay in the darkness of my room, my cuts throbbing, and I saw before me, even with my eyes closed, the anguish in my mother's face, the helpless confusion in her hands, the accusation stationed in her eyes. I lay awake while my mother snored peacefully in the other room in her bed of victory. I heard the night train approach, pass, roaring and whistling in the brittle air, fade away. I heard the clock in St. Mary's Church strike twelve; I heard my father come home, heard him mount the stairs, heard the torrent of his urination, heard him flush the toilet, close the bedroom door, snore beside her. And I prayed to my Father in heaven to help me keep my promise, to help me to be good and escape the wickedness bred into me by my father on earth.

Still this tale continues, for that night commenced six years of absurd and terrible virtue. It took me that long to realize that I had been duped. During that period when I grew, bodily at least, into a man, I did everything for my mother. I dried the dishes and cleaned the house and cut the grass and ran the errands, and if my father wanted me for anything—to help him at the freight house, or help fix the car or dig out the basement—he had to check with her first. I was her slave. Had I not, after all, saved her life?

I threw myself into school activities to make her proud of me. I became president of the Torch Club, the Conservation Club, the Quill and Scroll. I made the first-string basketball team because I was tall and fast, and I would have mashed my brains and body to porridge

in football except the coach, who was the same for all sports, had the good sense not to let me. I became president of the Epworth League and often pinch-hit for the minister in the pulpit.

My mother was the envy of every woman in Brigham's Crossing. They came to her several times a week saying, "Why, my yes, Missus McKinley, that surely is a good boy," or "Well, Phyllis, aren't you just *proud* of that young'un, I'll tell you." Pride was a virtue to my mother, not a deadly sin, and she was proud of me indeed. She couldn't have asked for a stronger, more dutiful son; and though my physical strength had come straight from my father, she took credit for that too. "What do you feed that boy, Phyllis?" her friends would say as they accosted us, side by side, on the street with me towering slant-wise like Pisa over the rest of the population. "Why, just the usual mother's love," she'd reply, and when I was asked, as I always was, how tall I had become, I would answer, in deference to honesty and my teammates, "I'm not nearly as tall as Jerry Keller and Orin Larsen, I'm only six-two in my stocking-feet," and my mother would always leap to my defense, "Oh, but *son*, those Larsens are *Swedes*; why, they're not really *human*, I mean, they get so tall they just grow all out of proportion. Nobody'd expect you to compete with a *Swede*." And always I wanted to say, but never did, that I was not, in fact, competing with anybody. I did not smoke in those days (though all the others did); I never went with them to the winery on the hill back of town. I did not masturbate; I did not put my arm around a girl in public.

All of these things that I did and did not do, I performed with a vicious dedication, for by the time I had surpassed my father's size and acquired the attributes of my manhood, I was a senior in high school; I knew then I was making payments and that, when the last one was laid down, I would be free of debt and burden, I would have paid in full for my evil childhood, for the love my mother gave me, and I would be even-*Steven*, free-as-a-bird; so my dedication was to reach that day, that Graduation, that Matriculation into my own life, that Commencement.

Over the years my mother had saved enough to start me out at the state university. At the moment of my departure, my father came out of his defeated and disappointed shell and told me to have a good time, but not to go "college" or go "wild"; and my mother, kissing me goodbye at the depot, said:

"Stay the same sweet boy that you are," and I, all shiny-cheeked and downy-lipped and huge hanging hands, said that she needn't worry, that I certainly would.

As soon as the train was around the bend and out of sight of town, I went back into the dining car and ordered beer, which, except for two bottles with one of the waterfront whores one night when I was fifteen, I had had no experience with. On the money my mother had so providently set aside for me out of her own frail means, I drank bottle after bottle of Budweiser and arrived at my new life absolutely stoned.

The first year at the University, I burnt every candle

I could get ahold of at both ends. There were so many things to do I hardly had time to go to class, and when I did go, I was often late. I attended nearly all examinations drunk or with a hangover and I can say here that there is no better way to pass a test for which you are not prepared than when you are at least a little bit smashed. With all this, I got excellent grades because any halfwit can pass the freshman year at the University of Iowa without ever getting out of bed. All the other boys from Brigham's Crossing pledged fraternities or took rooms in dormitories, but I went off to a private room in town and then divorced myself from the ready-made social groups for which I had an inborn loathing. My friends were people from the arts and the cities and usually older than I was, and my passion for round, warm, dark Jewish girls was insatiable; I had never in my life seen a Jewish girl before. Like a good son I went home for Christmas, but those weekends when all the fellows from B.C. piled in a car and hurried back with their laundry cases stuffed with stinking socks and shorts and T shirts for their mothers to wash and iron and return, I usually took a small dark Brooklyn girl—how exotic a girl from Brooklyn was to me in the middle of Iowa, me, the all-Midwestern boy, you can't possibly know unless you came from there—to a cabin up the river that I borrowed whenever I needed it from a friend named Pete who was a sophomore in psychology and whose father was a very successful New York radiologist. When my mother, in her letters, complained about my absence on weekends I explained that the work was hard and the teachers strict and that in order to get such good grades I had to keep my nose to the grindstone—an expression I knew she would appreciate, she had so often used it herself.

By the time Easter came around, the light of spring showed me what I had done to myself. My eyes were dark and hollow, my gut stuck out softly, my flesh was dead-fish white, and pimpled from lack of vitamins. I had a chronic cough from the thousands and thousands of cigarettes I had inhaled into my seared lungs since fall. I had not been to the barber for over a month and had eaten nothing but cheeseburgers, popcorn, and beer since Christmas. If I climbed more than one flight of stairs to class, I gasped for breath, and I couldn't chin myself twice. I was not yet seventeen. When, at Easter, my mother saw me, she nearly passed out. "Son, son, what have you done to yourself?" I, of course, saw no reason to burden her with the truth, with recounts of night after night of Stravinsky and booze and sex until dawn and straight to class with no sleep and to the movies after that and back to beer and insatiable bodies in the Kem-toned, orange-crate, studio-couch apartments of graduate students in the graphic and performing arts. I told her that you had to work hard and stay up late if you wanted to get ahead.

That summer, Pete and I went up north to a lumber camp where we felled and bucked trees, working like horses and sleeping like babes; and on weekends we went into town and drank and whored and brawled like Bunyan's spawn and came back for the fall term, hard

and brown and bulging with muscle, Pete with a front tooth knocked out and I with a dose of clap.

Thanks to penicillin, I was well in three days, though it took the dental school a little longer to fill in the gap in the front of Pete's mouth. It was done, however, and we set out to ravage another year. It was my second and Pete's third, but his turned out to be very short because his draft board back in Manhattan refused to defer him any longer for psychology and he was summoned to war in November.

I settled down a little then. Without Pete's cabin and Pete's car and Pete's allowance from Park Avenue, I was forced to take more interest in my studies. I found, then, real pleasure in such things as European history, English literature, the Russian novel, botany, geology, and astronomy; and in such odd reading as Freud, Proust, Chaucer, and the *Lives of the Saints*. I engendered a sentimental fascination for the medieval pilgrimage, and the pilgrims' badges that proclaimed, I AM A PILGRIM AND I COME IN PEACE, especially the badge of the Zebedean James, "the scallop-shell of quiet," as Raleigh described it. And I memorized the phrase from an otherwise doleful book of Goethe's called the *Sorrows of Young Werther*: "Ja wohl bin ich nur ein Wanderer, ein Waller auf der Erde —seid ihr denn mehr?"

So you can see there was something besides pillage in me. What it was exactly, and where, or what form it has taken, I don't know.

The war raged in the newsreels, and all the young men were funneling into the forces, many of them on campus. I grew restless.

When I reached seventeen and a half I tried to join the Navy flight program, but their crafty medical specialists unearthed a physical weakness that I was totally unaware of—my eyes were slightly crossed. None of the higher programs would have me, and I was damned if I'd wait until they dragged me off to be a cross-eyed doggy.

I had never seen the sea except the heartland imitations—the seas of corn and wheat, the inverted seas of cloudless sky. I had seen the river run south all my life of course, and I knew it ran to the Gulf, so I left school, brutally ignored my mother's tears, and traveled down to New Orleans, which was nearly blockaded then by German subs at the mouth of the river. Men were being shanghaied off the streets to make the Liberty run out Southwest Pass, but they didn't have to shanghai me; I went of my own free will, and that's how I came to be a sailor.

I never did get back to college. I never got back home to Brigham's Crossing either. I kept on shipping out after the war, to South America, to Europe, to the Mediterranean and the Near and Far East, to Canada and Alaska, until that summer of 1952 when I was twenty-six and I quit the sea and took a trip to Europe on my own. That's the remarkable summer I'm going to tell you about in this book. •

*Chapter One of the novel All Men Are Mariners to be published in September by McGraw-Hill Book Company.*



"The papers played it down voluntarily,"  
Monsignor McNally. "We didn't ask them  
to."

"I'm sure you didn't," said the Archbishop. "Might I see that clipping again?"

The Monsignor handed it to him and, coming around the desk, re-read it for the hundredth time over the Archbishop's shoulder:

Thomas Fitzgibbons, 26, of 1178 Station St., was convicted today in "B" Court, Magistrate Baxter presiding, on charge of molesting a seven-year-old girl. Fitzgibbons, who appeared in clerical dress, is a curate on the staff of a midtown church.

The child told the court she met the defendant while playing on the church grounds. He spoke to her and asked her to accompany him into a doorway. There he kissed her, disarranged her clothing, and caressed her.

Defense counsel brought out in cross-examination that the child suffered no physical injury. She told her parents of the incident, saying that the man was dressed in black. The parents called police, who later arrested Fitzgibbons at the church rectory. He has no previous record.

Fitzgibbons offered no explanation for his action. He stated that he didn't know why he had done it. Magistrate Baxter remanded him in custody for one week, pending sentence.

"Well," said the Monsignor, looking at the dog-eared clipping, "well, there you are! The young fool!"

"He appears for sentence this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"Before the same magistrate?"

"Yes."

"I know Baxter," said the Archbishop. "He comes to my New Year's receptions. I believe that he has a papal decoration of some sort."

"Should we have contacted him?"

"Certainly not. The man must be tried like anyone

else. It's very good of the papers, though."

"We haven't been bothered at the rectory—oh, we had a few calls from them. And some cranks worked it out that Fitzgibbons lives at the rectory. This still isn't an overwhelmingly Catholic city."

"Far from it," said the Archbishop, smiling faintly. "But we've been treated very well."

"And now this boy puts us all in a false position. It's a shame."

"How long has he been with you?"

"Since he was ordained. He's a local boy—went to Saint Clare's."

"He's not an order priest, then?"

"No. A secular. Why?"

"Sometimes in cases like this the question of discipline becomes rather involved."

"He's a secular, all right. You ordained him yourself in the cathedral, two years ago last spring."

"A graduating class of about forty?"

"I wasn't there."

"Let me think," said the Archbishop. "Fitzgibbons? Hmm!" He turned it over for a moment. "A thin fair boy, a little under six feet. Nothing to say for himself. Nervous."

"That's the one."

"I remember. He said his first Mass at Saint Clare's."

"Sure. That's his home parish."

"Is it a big family?"

"I called Bill Egan. He remembers the lad. It isn't a big family; he's the only boy. Three sisters."

"Parents living?"

"His father's dead. The mother is a most devout woman. It's a completely respectable family."

"Have any of them been to the jail?"

"Well, no. I don't believe so."

"I see. Have you talked to him at all?"

"I've been to the jail once. He's terribly ashamed of

himself." The Monsignor paused.

"Yes?"

"There's one good thing," he went on in a relieved tone. "At least it wasn't a little boy."

"Has there been any of that?" asked the Archbishop, tonelessly.

"There was an incident he was mixed up in at the seminary."

"You've examined his seminary record?"

"I've talked to McCall and Leslie. Here's the report." He pushed forward a cardboard file-folder.

"No, thank you," said the Archbishop hastily. "I don't want to read a lot of Paul McCall's amateur psychology. He's a bit of a stuffed shirt, you know."

The Monsignor chuckled in agreement. "I was at the sem with him while you were still in Rome. There's no harm in Paul. He's a good chap."

"Doubtless! Doubtless! As an advisor on vocations, though, he may not be ideal. What does he say about Fitzgibbons?"

"He could hardly remember him—just the little incident I alluded to."

"Well?"

"There was nothing to it. Apparently Fitzgibbons was very attached to an older boy, Francis Kelly."

"The athlete?"

"That's the one. Big, husky, jolly fellow. He played a year or two of pro ball and some college football. Fitzgibbons idolized him."

"What else?"

"That's all."

"Look here, Leonard, you're not addressing the Altar Society. Speak out!"

"Finally Frank Kelly complained to Father McCall

that the other boy wouldn't leave him alone."

"What did he mean by that?"

"McCall says that Fitzgibbons just wouldn't let Kelly out of his sight."

"And that's all there was to it?"

"Yes. But nobody thought the situation was very sound."

"What happened?"

"They moved Kelly to another room. Fitzgibbons was alone for about three months just before he had to decide whether to go on."

"And McCall was advising him?"

"McCall and Leslie and LaJeunesse."

"LaJeunesse ought to have known something was up."

"He probably did. The advisors were two to one in favor of his proceeding."

"In a case like this it ought to be unanimous."

"I suppose it ought."

"You know it ought. It can't be helped now. How was he in the parish?"

The Monsignor jumped at the chance to say something favorable. "He was fine, quiet, did a lot of baptisms. He took the six o'clock Mass."

"And you didn't feel that there was anything wrong with him?"

"Not in the least. He was a little nervous, used to go to bed directly after dinner. I believe he needed a lot of rest and, as I say, he did the early Mass."

"Who are your other assistants?"

"Dick Fahy—old Monsignor Fahy's nephew—and Ted Wriscinski. He speaks Polish."

"Who handles the French?"

"Fitzgibbons did. He spoke French quite well and most of the French people liked him very much."

"How did Fahy and Wriscinski like him?"

"Just fine. They were shocked, naturally."

"Naturally," said the Archbishop. "I guess that's all;

they're bringing the car around. I suppose we can see him before he goes up for sentencing."

"Yes, I called to ask."

Getting to his feet, the Archbishop picked up the file folder resignedly. "I'll look at this on the way down," he said.

In the limousine the two men were nearly silent. Leaning back into the deep upholstery, the Archbishop leafed through Father McCall's copious report, paying special attention to the account of the boy's background: "...father dead when boy was three. Mrs. Fitzgibbons made great sacrifices to keep Tom at the Seminary. One sister a nun, one married, the third has a good secretarial post; the whole family perfectly praiseworthy middle-class Catholics. Nothing like this ever happened to them before, the mother prostrate at what has happened, never wants to see Tom again..."

At this version of the case the Archbishop sighed, seeing its possibilities all too clearly. How many young men had he known, he asked himself, only sons, whose vocation to the priesthood had grown up in similar circumstances? He turned to a later section of the report: "...told him that this was the most momentous step of his life, that it was irreversible. We asked him repeatedly if he felt a perfect conviction, encouraging him to speak out if he did not. Once he said that he didn't dare disappoint everyone, but we told him that other people's disappointment was immaterial. He claimed it wasn't really worrying him....He was well-behaved, amenable to the discipline, a good, though not outstanding, student. Not popular with his class but not unpopular either. Taking all the circumstances into account, we advised him to go ahead. His advisors would pray for him and doubtless God would send him the graces needed to discharge the duties of the priesthood..."

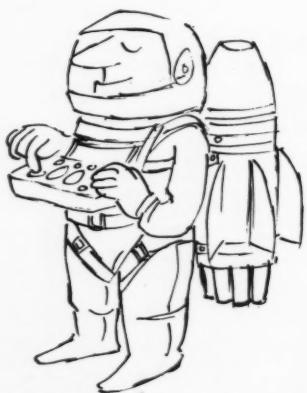
We throw it all on God, thought the Archbishop. Is God responsible for supporting and healing the ruin we systematically build into ourselves? Quite apart from grace, merely humanly, the priestly state isn't the normal

one. It has its peculiar tensions. And when we drive someone into states of tension which he finds unendurable, must God make up the difference? He closed his eyes.

"Here we are," said Monsignor McNally softly, as though he were afraid the Archbishop slept. The car rolled to a halt and the two men got out, looking silently at the grey massive bulk of the Parry Street jail.

"You can leave us here, Phil," the Archbishop directed the driver. "We'll walk to the National Club for lunch. When I need you again I'll ring the office."

"Yes, your Grace," said the driver, half-saluting. He rolled quietly away as the two priests solemnly mounted



the stairs. Inside, at the reception desk, they were cordially received—the Archbishop was on perfect terms with all civic officials. The Prison Governor came out of his office to shake hands.

"Good to see you, Walter."

"Good to see you, your Grace, even under these circumstances."

"A sad business," put in the Monsignor.

"Yes," said the Governor, leading them to the elevator. "A sad affair. I'll show you the way." They rose silently in the tiny elevator, getting out on the third floor and walking back into the cellblock. "He's a quiet enough lad; he's been no trouble at all. I suppose he'll get a suspended sentence?"

"We have no idea," said the Archbishop, with a curious emphasis.

"It's the usual thing in such cases. There's no lasting harm been done."

"No."

"He didn't hurt the child, after all," said the Governor. "Well, there you are, three doors down. I'll leave you here."

"Thank you, Walter," said the Archbishop gratefully. "Will we see you on the way out?"

"No. I've got to go to a meeting." He beckoned to a guard. "Let these—uh—these gentlemen in to see young Fitzgibbons. They can stay as long as they like." Then he turned away.

When they entered the cell, Fitzgibbons was standing with his back to them, staring out the window. He turned around and stood silent for a moment, peering at them as though he could scarcely make them out. Suddenly he went to his knees and grasped the Archbishop's hand to kiss his ring. Raising the hand to his lips, he kissed the jewel with more than the usual perfunctory gesture, remained kneeling for a few seconds and then rose, turned away from them, and went back to the window. He wore ordinary clothes—a pair of rumpled flannel trousers, a blue shirt without a tie, and a leather and wool windbreaker.

Finally he spoke. Squaring his thin shoulders he turned from the window and said, surprisingly all politeness, "Won't you sit down, your Grace?"

"Thank you, son. How have they been treating you?"

"Very well. They've been very kind."

"Have you been getting enough to eat?"

"As much as I want. I haven't much appetite. I know how busy you are, your Grace. It's a shame to bring you all the way down here."

"Never mind about that," directed the Archbishop curtly. "What am I going to do about you?"

"I'm under suspension, am I not? I'm no longer effectively a priest?"

"You'll always be a priest. Surely you remember that the mark of Holy Orders can never be removed from the soul."

"But I can't act as one. I'm not complaining. I have it coming. I just want to know where I am."

"We'll begin," said the Archbishop, "with the impor-

tant facts. First of all, you won't go to prison. You'll most probably get a suspended sentence. Mind you, if you ever do it again you'll be in dreadful trouble." Saying this, the Archbishop realized that it was the last thing he should have said. The boy looked terrified. Hastily, he went on: "Your ecclesiastical suspension was formal and automatic. Do you understand me? Any priest who becomes seriously involved with the civil authorities comes under the same discipline. It's a mere preliminary, not a condemnation. Do you see?"

"Yes, your Grace." Fitzgibbons smiled, gratefully.

"Very good! No one is seeking to bury you under a great weight of blame. I'm not in the habit of condemning men until I know what they've done. I want to know, honestly, from you, what precisely you've done and what it is you're guilty of."

"Don't you know?" The terror was still there.

"I know the facts!" the Archbishop burst out impatiently. "I'm ignorant of the causes and the implications."

"I don't know... I don't know."

"That's what you said in court; and it just won't do. You'll have to tell me."

"I don't know anything to tell."

"Listen to me, Fitzgibbons," the Archbishop said dryly, "what we want to do, you and I and the Monsignor here, is to restore you to the place that's best for you. We want to preserve what's good in you and what's natural. We do not—now I mean this—we do not want to destroy you or make your life insupportable. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Father."

"Now since you can't tell me, I'll ask you. Do you mind answering one or two questions?"

"No, Father... I mean, your Grace... please ask me."

"Were you unhappy as a priest?"

"Yes, I was."

"Why?"

"I was lonely. I had no friends."

"Not even Christ?"

"Your Grace, my religious life wasn't enough. I mean, it wasn't alive."

"I know what you mean. Did you have impulses like this before?"

"Like, with the little girl?"

"Of course."

"Well—" he paused. "I kept wanting to hold somebody."

"To hold somebody?"

"To touch somebody. In my arms. I wanted it to be there."

"I see. Are you sorry you became a priest? Would you have done otherwise in different circumstances?"

"I'm not good enough."

"Did you really want to become a priest?"

"I really did, so far as I can remember."

"That's all," said the Archbishop flatly, disappointed. He got to his feet. "All right, Fitzgibbons, we'll be at the City Hall with you this afternoon. If, as I suppose, the sentence is suspended, you will come home with me."

We'll discuss this further when you're in a little better shape. Take courage, man."

"I'm eternally grateful."

"There's nothing to be grateful about. Good morning."

Humbly, the young man showed them to the door. The guard, who had been hovering near, let them out. As they passed down the corridor Fitzgibbons craned his neck, watching them go.

Very little passed between Monsignor McNally and the Archbishop at lunch, which they ate solemnly and at length in the cathedral-like hush of the National Club. From time to time the great of the city passed their table—stockbrokers, the Mayor, a sporting millionaire—gracious nods were exchanged but the two priests wore an air of cautious reserve and, unusually, no one joined them for coffee. At one-thirty they rose, made their unhurried way out of the Club, crossed the street and walked the half-block north to City Hall Square. They crossed the square diagonally, making for the east wing, where the courtrooms were. The court was on the point of convening after the luncheon recess and they slipped past the doorman just as he was closing the doors.

When they had found seats at the very back of the courtroom the Archbishop flicked his overcoat collar up around his neck; in unrelieved black he resembled any other priest. But, unluckily, from the corner of his eye he saw a young man at the press table turn and stare across at him, nudging the man sitting next to him. Boldly, the Archbishop turned and stared back at them. He had nothing to conceal although, to be sure, he didn't wish to emphasize his presence.

For an hour a steady procession of minor offenders took their places on the stand, were charged with drunkenness, creating disturbances, soliciting, the invariable offenses. Policemen were sworn in, asked: "You are a police officer, I believe?" by the sweating prosecutor, and delivered of petty evidence; none of the accused were acquitted. One by one they trailed despondently out to take their places in the wagon. Finally the remands began to appear and Monsignor McNally spotted Fitzgibbons, paler than ever, third in line.

Soon the court clerk sang out: "Thomas Fitzgibbons." Wearing a most disturbed expression he came forward to receive sentence. At this point, surprisingly, the Magistrate took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes, and disarranged the papers on his desk. As he readjusted his glasses he stared across the room at the two clergymen; he had certainly noticed them.

It was evident to everyone that Fitzgibbons was in a pitiable, nervous state, that he could scarcely stand erect. Magistrate Baxter frowned and gazed at him.

"You are Thomas Fitzgibbons of 1178 Station Street, of this city."

"Yes," he whispered.

"And you were convicted before me, one week ago today, on a charge of molesting a young girl."

"Yes."

The Magistrate took up a pencil and began to roll it in the palms of his hands. Very slowly he began to speak,

almost as though he were thinking out loud.

"You have been convicted of a most serious offense. In these cases the law provides the penalty of a term of imprisonment, of not less than six months in fact, nor more than a year. On a rigorous construction of the charge you might have been convicted in a superior court of a most serious matter indeed. I mean the attempted rape of a juvenile. Do you understand how very serious that might have been?"

"Yes."

"You might now be appearing to be sentenced to a term of years in penitentiary, perhaps accompanied by a number of lashes. You have been very fortunate."

Fitzgibbons looked faint.

"Now I am not disposed to leniency in cases of this kind. Public opinion very naturally regards them with aversion and the law supports this opinion. Men must always judge harshly the actions of those who take advantage of the innocence and weakness of the very young."

There was a pause while a glass of water was brought to Fitzgibbons.

"Furthermore," continued the Magistrate, "although strictly speaking a man's profession has nothing to do in law with our estimate of his guilt, your own profession is a most responsible one. I will not dwell on this but I recommend you to think about it carefully. You are an educated man. Your own conscience will penalize you perhaps even more than the court can do."

"Until now your life has been unmarked by any stain of this sort. This is what is known as a 'first offense.' I do not believe, with some magistrates, that everyone is entitled to one little crime to begin with. I mean that I do not approve of an automatic suspension of sentence for first offenders, especially in cases of this nature." He paused, took out a handkerchief and wiped his glasses. Then, earnestly, he resumed.

"I remanded this case for sentence because I wished to consider what should be done with you. I know that your associates will give you every possible assistance. They will do what they can to ensure that this occurrence is not repeated. Can you give me any assurance on your own part that it will not be repeated?"

Fitzgibbons was deathly still at this question, and at the back of the court the two clergymen sat up, electrified.

"Well?" pursued the Magistrate.

"I'll try," Fitzgibbons mumbled.

"I asked for an assurance," said the Magistrate, coldly.

"I won't do it again."

"Then taking into consideration the fact brought out by the defense that the victim of your act does not appear to have suffered greatly by it, and bearing in mind that you have a clean record until now, with some grave hesitation of mind I am going to suspend sentence. This means that you will go free. But I must warn you that a recurrence will mean that a more serious charge may be laid. You will not be treated with leniency a second time. That is all. You may step down."

A slight movement rippled around the courtroom as Fitzgibbons stumbled through the line of prisoners and out the wicket-gate into the well of the court. He looked around dazedly and then slumped into a vacant seat, apparently afraid to cause any disturbance by attempting to leave. As the other proceedings went on, his lawyer tiptoed over and sat down beside him.

Half an hour later the last of the remands had been sentenced and the court rose. The Archbishop pushed his way through the spectators to Fitzgibbons' side, the Monsignor in his wake.

"Come on," he ordered. "We'd better get out of here." They moved in a group out into the hallway and to the head of the stairs where there was a payphone. "I'll call the car. Wait here," the Archbishop directed. When he emerged from the booth, Monsignor McNally and the lawyer had disappeared.

"Come along with me," he said. "They'll pick us up at the corner of the Square." The halls were empty now and they made their way out into the sunlight. Soon the car appeared; they climbed in and were driven uptown to the Archbishop's palace.

"The first thing we'll do," said the Archbishop when they were safely home, "is get you out of those clothes. I don't have anything that'll fit you, but one of the assistants will." He pressed a button on his desk and an elderly woman came in.

"Yes, your Grace?"

"Mrs. Bauer, will you get hold of Norman James if he's around? Ask him if he can lend me a suit of clothes, a shirt and tie, and so on. Tell him I'll get them back to him tomorrow."

"I'll come back shortly," she said, stealing a glance at Fitzgibbons.

"Good!" exclaimed the Archbishop; and Mrs. Bauer turned and went out. Swinging around in his chair the Archbishop smiled encouragingly. "There's a lavatory next to this office. You can change in there when she comes back. How do you feel?"

"May I sit down, your Grace?"

"This isn't a police station. Do as you please."

The young man slumped into a chair as if the strings of his leg muscles would not carry him further. He said nothing. His eyes followed without curiosity the pattern of the carpet as though he were under the influence of some opiate.

"How do you feel?" demanded the Archbishop, more insistently.

"Afraid."

"There's no need. In six months this will be forgotten."

"I can't go back to the parish."

"I've thought of that. What you *can* do is work in one of the country parishes for a while. In a few years you can come back to the city if things work out. I mean," he

amended delicately, "if you feel equal to the demand. You're not to be driven away."

"You do too much for me, your Grace. I'm not worth it."

"I'm not thinking of your personal welfare. It's the priestly order and the sacrament of Holy Orders I'm concerned with. Don't flatter yourself, my boy."

"Even at that, I'm escaping too easily."

The Archbishop suddenly became articulate: "Don't plead that puritanical guilt to me. Don't come begging to be punished." He rose and moved around his office in sudden agitation. "This has ceased to be a personal matter. I intend to place you where you can work. Where you can live! I hate wanton destruction. I hate it! I cannot stand by and let you ruin yourself; and I won't see you ruined by the murderous vindictiveness of others."

Fitzgibbons stirred uneasily in his chair. He was much struck by the expression on the face of the Archbishop who was growing more and more violent. He marched up before Fitzgibbons, took a square stance on the carpet, and spoke directly down at him.

"You would like to be put in jail, wouldn't you? You'd love to be free of responsibility. You had no genuine vocation and now you can't support the choice you made. You were advised, man, you were advised. Perhaps badly advised, but there it is. Now you've got to make the best of it."

Fitzgibbons tried to interrupt him but he went on: "You're not maladjusted, not misunderstood. You made a mistake and you paid too much attention to your advisors, and now you're a priest and the responsibility's making you sick. Be a priest, son! BE one! If you can't do it for the sake of Christ, do it for your own decency and dignity." His voice went up and up until Mrs. Bauer, coming into the room with the borrowed black suit, interrupted him. She crossed the room without a word, handed the neat pile of clothing to Fitzgibbons, then turned and walked out.

Fitzgibbons stood up, his eyes fixed on the Archbishop's face. Holding the clothes in front of him in his outstretched arms, he went towards the door. Halfway across the room he stopped and turned around. His face was bloodless.

"Can I put these on?" he asked. "*Can I?*"

"Yes," said the Archbishop, his shoulders slumping.

With a convulsive movement Fitzgibbons threw the clothes on the big leather sofa. "No I can't. I *can't*," he cried. "Don't you see? I know I'm going to do it again. Again and again." He dropped to his knees beside the sofa, buried his face in the pile of borrowed clothing and began to sob.

The Archbishop stared sightlessly at the wall. This day as on all other days, growing day by day, he felt within him the magnitude of his defeat.



NO DOGS ALLOWED



NO DOGS ALLOWED



NO DOGS ALLOWED



NO DOGS ALLOWED



NO DOGS ALLOWED



## minority

To be the absent thing, strangely me,  
And all the stuffed solids of majorities,  
Fog and pigment pounded color,  
And the sheen of passion hugging.  
But just a moment, I, next to nothing,  
Absent thing.

Of the heights, their graphs are size and distance—  
And the army marches in its anger of noise,  
Its prison of substance.  
And I, my minimums, my warm little numbers,  
Peculiar and learning.  
Move, make room!  
But I will not move.

Eyes inward and behold the outlines of my soul,  
My nose of instinct,

The scents and essence of my other worlds,  
My mother and my muscles.  
And this, this too as transient and lusty  
As any other shape deserves.  
There are spans—  
The separations and of living,  
Nothing all equal seen or seeing.  
To be alone a margin away,  
A breath-thin blanket,  
Not enough, and yet the absent thing  
Is real.  
Not common like together,  
Not here, this, that solid place;  
An angrily bitter  
Grotesquely severed time,  
But strangely me,  
What I truly am.

GERSHON LIEBERMAN

## a grandmother's advice to her granddaughter

*I kissed your infant toes—  
O child, like ten wild cherries dancing.*

You ask advice.  
And I advise.  
Love. O it's nice.  
But never love in unlit rooms.  
Let dead men choose to lie in tombs.  
*O child, like ten wild cherries dancing.*

It's loneliness  
Most men confuse  
With happiness.  
Love the dear commonplace reversed.  
Love nakedly and unrehearsed.  
*O child, like ten wild cherries dancing.*

Calculated  
Minds lose sight  
Of what they've hated.  
The quickest way is always best,  
When love demands we get undressed.  
*O child, like ten wild cherries dancing.*

MYRON TURNER

# contact REVIEWS & COMMENT



## GOD AND THE HELICOPTER

It must be that we have become so bored with the well-made film—slick, totally predictable in direction, editing, etc.—that when something like *Last Year at Marienbad* comes along (or *Breathless* which was worse) we hasten to acclaim it for its refreshing avoidance of convention and its “imaginative treatment” of an unusual story (or non-story); and we are so dazzled by what seems to be new and rebellious—or simply intransigent—that we cannot see the utter vacuity underneath. When I say we, I don’t mean me. Me, I think *Last Year at Marienbad* is a tedious and lugubrious movie (that organ, that ever-groaning organ) though, of course, it is not really a bad one. It does what it sets out to do, and I can’t argue with that. What it does, however, moves me to nothing short of sleep. A friend of mine said that his “cruel and unjust” punishment for just about every cardinal sin would be to strap the transgressor in a chair and run *Marienbad* at him day and night. I don’t think this movie is meant to be a hoax—unless you consider Alain Robbe-Grillet, who wrote the script, to be a hoax—judging from Alain Resnais’ previous film, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, which was deadly serious and marvelous indeed. Clearly, in making this latest film, those young fellows had a splendid time wandering around Schleissheim and the Nymphenburg with their Kodaks (I got the feeling now and then that the actors were a nuisance to Resnais, that he

didn’t *really* want to photograph anything but the furniture); and I do not begrudge them a clearly rewarding holiday. Constantly stalking them through the corridors of the Paris studio was, of course, the familiar of Cocteau; but there was little in the film that the lush old master himself has not done better. *Marienbad* started out well, but after a very short time it became quite clear that both M. Robbe-Grillet and M. Resnais had plain run out. Delphine Seyrig is the confused young lady, and the man—The Stranger—who keeps staring at her or away from her and breaking her down with his tiresome insistence that they were lovers last year at a non-existent bath, is Giorgio Albertazzi. The third man, who may or may not be the husband and who keeps playing table games, is Sacha Pitooff and he struck me as being the most interesting of the lot. The rape scene was cut out of the print I saw, but I doubt if it makes much difference.

It’s fun and easy to make remarks about screwy movies like *Marienbad*; but it’s another labor altogether to comment upon a fine serious film such as *Through a Glass Darkly* which is Ingmar Bergman’s newest and, perhaps, best. I like *The Seventh Seal* so much that I hesitate to admit that Bergman could do better, but maybe he has. It’s hard to tell yet. I have seen *Through a Glass Darkly* only once, and I have seen *The Seventh Seal* at least four times. I like a movie—or a book—that stuns me at first and then reveals, upon subsequent view-

ings, provocative depths. Not all of Bergman's films do this. *The Magician* and *The Virgin Spring*, for instance, I don't ever have to see again; but *The Seventh Seal*, *The Devil's Eye* (which many people take to be merely a bedroom comedy), and *Through a Glass Darkly* are works of the creative imagination as important and valuable as the best of literature, and they should be seen, if possible, whenever one's spirit thirsts for whatever nectar it is that great art provides. From the first second to the last the mood of *Through a Glass Darkly* is relentlessly sustained by a very spare use of a single cello playing Bach (what a difference in effect from that inescapable *Marienbad* organ), by those familiar Bergman loves—the sound of rain and water, bird cries, wind and sea noises, the dark shore, clouds, rocky island, the walls of a house; and particularly by that extraordinary company of actors that seems to know the writer-director's inner heart as well as he does himself. It is a mistake to try to "work out" a Bergman movie by trying to explain symbols and define meanings in any other terms than those in which they are presented. The meaning is contained in the experience itself, in the overtones of that experience, and in the evocations of human truths arising from what is said, seen, and heard. This is as it should be, and this is the way of art as opposed to science or journalism—and there is precious little of this art around these days. In *Through a Glass Darkly* the girl is going mad and knows it. (She has a very wiggy room in the attic for this purpose where she seeks God behind the wallpaper and voices call her from an empty closet.) Her novelist father, like God himself, coolly watches her decay, writing it all down in his notebook for future use. The madness, of course, has a great many overtones of divine sexual hysteria common to certain periods of religious commotion such as the early Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation, and in this way Bergman maintains one of his favorite images—the woman whose insanity is possession by God or the Devil who are, of course, the same thing. She is taken away, in the end, by helicopter. (To the world's filmmakers there is, patently, something significant about the relationship between God and the helicopter—vid., *La Dolce Vita*—but I would not attempt to discover it here.) Before the girl goes away, however, she has seduced her brother, seen God—a lascivious hairy spider—and chosen her mad world in preference to the world of the others. After she has gone, the father speaks to his son about love, communicating with him for the first time; and the boy, with wonder and revelation on his face, utters the film's last words: "My father talked to me." Lars Passgård is the boy, Gunnar Björnstrand is the father, Harriet Andersson is the girl, and Max von Sydow is her decent, gently obtuse doctor-husband. When the lights come up on this piece, you are not quite sure where you are or where you have been, but the chances are you'll be going back.

The last words in *The Kitchen* are spoken by a wretched God-type figure, a restaurant owner (Eric Pohlmann) after one of his employees (Carl Mohner) has run amok and chopped the gas lines with a cleaver thus

bringing the owner's whole "world" to a halt. Why has the crazy cook presumed to do this? What could he hope to gain, what is there for him to gain? The owner demands to be told, and no one can tell him, not even the fish cook as he is led abjectly away. Sweat and suspicion cover the owner's face. He seems convinced that some primal knowledge of human existence is being withheld from him. He is left alone in his dead kitchen asking his agonizing question, "What is there more? What is there more?" This film is clearly meant to be a kind of social allegory of man's present condition (it has just about everything you can think of: race prejudice, race non-prejudice, divorce, abortion, injustice, the Bomb, etc. etc.) and like some other movies I will mention shortly, all British, it makes highly engrossing, highly accomplished, but very shallow forays into "deeper themes." It does what Bergman at his best does not do, it skims the surface and gives you all you need at one showing. It's from a play by Arnold Wesker who seems to indicate that God may still be with us, but he is probably nothing more than a spying owner of a bad restaurant. Bergman, on the other hand, seems to suggest that God has deserted us and left us naked in winter, bereft of the garments of His love; that He has left us to struggle haplessly on our own, unprepared to cope with our devastating ignorance of one another.

Three others, each as entertaining and as swiftly superficial as *The Kitchen* are: *The Victim*, a thriller about homosexual blackmail; *Taste of Honey* by Shelagh Delaney who seems to be a kind of Midlands Tom (Tennessee) Williams; and *Whistle Down the Wind*, another religious bit in which a child finds an escaped murderer in the barn and, because of a series of previous events and a remarkable resemblance, believes him to be Jesus Christ. To my mind it's the best of the lot, but then I'm hooked on the search for salvation and I still naïvely lament the Christian failure. I loved the scene in which the little boy, finally convinced that his sisters are right and the man is Christ, cries in sheer happiness "Gentle Jesus!" and rushes from the barn. His sisters follow and run up the hill, leaping and dancing in the joyous evening air to a very jingley arrangement of "Good King Wenceslaus." Hayley Mills, who is getting to be quite a dish, is the oldest of the children, and Alan Bates is Christ, the murderer. At the end, after he is finally flushed out of the hayloft by the constabulary, he undergoes a frisk silhouetted against the sky with his arms out in the first position of the Crucifixion. *Time* magazine thought it was corny, but I loved it. It was a very sad picture. •

CHACMOOL

## TWO REVIEWS

### I. Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Leslie Fiedler

A couple of years ago, Leslie Fiedler, the Wild Man of Missoula, Montana, came riding again out of the West, roaring with happy savagery as he cut a bloody swath among the genteel critics and set fires in assorted literary hayricks. *Love and Death in the American Novel* was a

book that simply could not be ignored in spite of its stretches of dullness, its air of calculated bloodthirstiness, and its author's addiction to Academic English. Fiedler's attack had not, in fact, been made without warning: He had already published one book of literary and political essays, and even earlier had announced his general strategy in a piece in *Partisan Review* called "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey," in which he had laid out his argument that the archetypal myth of American literature was the picture of black and white males fleeing from civilization in each other's arms. Now, in *Love and Death*, Fiedler widened the area of his attack to the entire range of our literature and the general failure of the American writer to "deal with adult heterosexual love and his consequent obsession with death, incest, and innocent homosexuality."

The critics and reviewers stood to their weapons, and the ensuing gunfire was a delight to watch. In the *New York Herald Tribune*, Willard Thorp complained rather pettishly that Fiedler did not play fair and suggested that he really wasn't a literary critic at all. Malcolm Cowley, in a page-one review in *The New York Times Book Review*, also complained of Fiedler's stacked deck. *The New Yorker* preferred the metaphor of a verbal shell game although it also found him "mettlesome and learned." *Time* called *Love and Death* "a tumid, quasi-psychoanalytic study...at times brilliant and rarely a bore," while Irving Howe in the *New Republic* accused Fiedler of a deficiency of character.

Clearly, any book that causes such a massive flow of adrenalin can't, as the saying goes, be *all* bad; and it seems to me that *Love and Death* is in some ways a very good book indeed, particularly as a therapeutic dose of Epsom salts for a literary Establishment that every year becomes flabbier and more academic. For those who missed the book (which is now available in a Meridian paperback), here is a sample of Fiedler in full stride, elaborating on the theme that there are no *women* in Hemingway's books: "In his earlier fictions, Hemingway's descriptions of the sexual encounter are unintentionally brutal, in his later ones unintentionally comic; for in no case can he quite succeed in making his females human, and coitus performed with an animal, a thing, or a wet dream is either horrible or ridiculous." This is worth several scholarly works written on 3x5 cards.

*Love and Death* is often manic, and a good deal of what Fiedler has to say about archetypes and myths is, to my mind, drivel; but, as somebody else has said, he is one of the few literary critics whose ideas one can remember from one day to the next. Fiedler is a sort of literary paratrooper, egocentric and swaggering, a little trigger-happy, but usually on Our Side.

It was with these feelings of general goodwill toward Fiedler, whom I had known casually during the war, that I started reading his latest book, a collection of stories called *Pull Down Vanity* (Lippincott, \$3.95). The first story, "The Teeth," turned out to be a composition of dismaying badness, an appalling example of what Fiedler himself has called the posturing of the avant-garde.

A writer who calls himself Warren Pease goes to visit three women who have written to him after sensing evidences of spiritual kinship in a piece he published in a little magazine called *Masks*. Outside the girls' door, the writer fits on a set of grotesque teeth bought at a fun shop. He deliberately turns the visit into a disaster, rebuffs their talk of love, escapes, and then sneaks back in time to hear one girl say, "The very walls rejected him!" Warren Pease moves away softly, nursing a sense of triumph. Whether Fiedler intended this piece to be taken straight or as a parody, it is pretty awful. I was stimulated by one sentence in which, as one of Warren's hostesses bends over, he sees "the fur between her breasts," but I'm afraid my response here was on a rather low level.

After reading "The Teeth," I decided I had better stop and take stock. Perhaps the whole thing was intended as a monstrous joke with an essential clue hidden somewhere on the jacket or in the front matter. The front of the jacket is adorned with a painting of a young lady tightrope walker dressed chiefly in an enormous picture hat. There is no fur visible between her breasts which rather disappointed me. I turned to the back of the jacket and found a great deal of white space surrounding a small but distressingly stagy photograph of Fiedler. It is a picture of the sort that an insensitive actor might have taken for his personal publicity. The bearded author is apparently wearing a black shirt or sweater and an outer garment that looks like a Dacron trenchcoat. He is rolling his eyes upward as he extends his hand toward the camera in a gesture that makes his entire pose unmistakably and embarrassingly prophetic. It is the picture of a man who takes himself with deadly seriousness.

Well, now! The last time I saw Fiedler in the flesh he was waiting patiently in a Navy chow line and the expression on his face was contemplative rather than ferocious. He may have been meditating on the innocent homosexuality of Ishmael and Queequeg, but I rather think that he was more concerned with the possibility that we were going to have stuffed peppers, mashed potatoes, and creamed corn for dinner again. The contrast of these pictures is, I think, the clue: Fiedler has turned into a writer who, without any humor at all, thinks of himself as a modern Isaiah charged with the mission of bringing back a healthy genitality into American life and letters. This is a splendid ambition for a young man, but there is nothing more ridiculous than a prophet who is not particularly skilled at his trade; and as a writer of fiction, Fiedler is just not very good.

In addition to this deficiency of talent, Fiedler works under the rather serious handicap of having to write for an audience that already knows him as a no-holds-barred critic. I'm sure Fiedler isn't unhappy about this, but I am. My trouble is that as I read his short stories I keep hearing echoes of his criticism.

As a critic, Fiedler's strength is in his frontal attack on the warped sexuality he sees in American literature. In reading novels as different in theme and quality as *Huckleberry Finn* and *Marjorie Morningstar*, Fiedler is dismayed by the evidences of what he calls innocent (i.e. unacknowledged) homosexuality, by the sentimental mys-

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tique of virginity (i.e., a girl is "ruined" when she loses her maidenhead), and by the bitchery of the putatively admirable women characters. In matters of technique, he deplores the classic American novelist's addiction to the "cheapjack machinery of the gothic novel." But whether Fiedler likes it or not, it seems plain to me that his best stories are about homosexuality, that he is often just as sentimental as the virgin-worshippers, that bitchery both male and female runs through his stories, and that gothic is precisely the word for one of his most ambitious pieces.

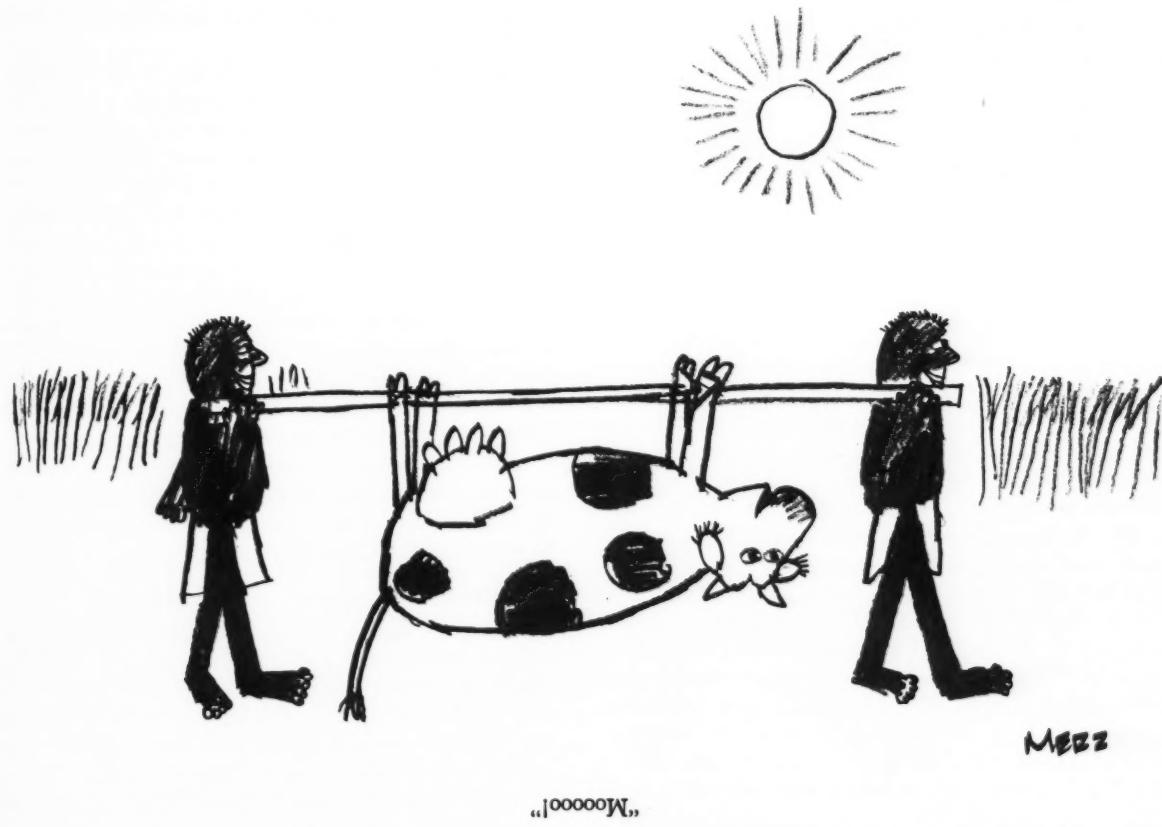
Probably the most often quoted passage from *Love and Death* is this: "Our great novelists, though experts on indignity and assault, on loneliness and terror, tend to avoid treating the passionate encounter of a man and woman, which we expect at the center of a novel. Indeed, they rather shy away from permitting in their fictions the presence of any full-fledged, mature women, giving us instead monsters of virtue or bitchery, symbols of the rejection or fear of sexuality."

This is plainly said and hard to forget. Unhappily, try as I can, I can't remember any of Fiedler's own female characters who are full-fledged, mature women. The girl in the title story, a beautiful, soft, large-breasted gentle girl married to an anti-Semitic graduate student, literally throws herself at the Jewish writer who tells the story. At the crucial moment the writer fails her, but the girl is not disappointed, telling her impotent lover, "It's hard to believe that you didn't really—that we didn't—I feel so *satisfied*, so happy." The writer himself acts with calculated male bitchery, and in the end the "passionate

encounter of a man and woman" is turned into a sad travesty of love.

So it is with the women in the other stories: In "The Fear of Innocence," the narrator returns childishly to his faceless wife as if to his mother, while of the various women in "Nude Croquet," the most memorable is Beatie, whose body is described as "a girl's body when he had touched it last, now all at once full-blown, the muscle tone gone, the legs mottled blue-black with varicose veins—like someone's mother." If these characters are not "symbols of the rejection or fear of sexuality," I'm not sure what the words mean. Furthermore, these ubiquitous mother-figures remind me that Fiedler has written scathingly of "Œdipal captives [who] hold up their silver chains to the light." I find this all rather confusing.

"Nude Croquet," a shocker that is said to have created a furor when it first appeared in *Esquire*, is curious in another way—it is a deliberately constructed gothic fantasy. As a critic, Fiedler has expressed his dismay that "In our most enduring books, the cheapjack machinery of the gothic novel is called on to represent the hidden blackness of the human soul and human society." As the author of "Nude Croquet," Fiedler has created a creaking apparatus of cheapjack gothic machinery in which a group of middle-aged friends gather for a reunion in an oceanside castle with sixty-two bedrooms, seven crazy turrets, and fifty carefully mutilated statues. They become drunk, and at the suggestion of the young wife of the castle's owner, strip to play a game of indoor croquet with leather-bound folios used for wickets. The



"Moooooool"



story ends with death and a loss of innocence. It is all as obviously and intentionally gothic as *Castle of Otranto*, and my only question is to ask what Fiedler thought he was about. My guess, perhaps an uncharitable one, is that, like a frankly commercial writer, he saw the sensational possibilities of displaying a collection of men and women romping bollicky-bareass through a rich man's house.

In his critical writings, Fiedler has often expressed his distaste for homosexuals both as characters and as writers. Once again, Fiedler's professions as a critic and his practice as a writer seem to meet head-on, for the most memorable character in the entire book, the one character who jumps up from the printed page and lives, the one character who, if I may say so, was created with love, is a grossly homosexual shoe salesman named Abie Peckelis.

Abie is the central character in two stories in which Fiedler is clearly drawing on his boyhood in Newark, New Jersey. Abie is a dreadful fellow, a triumphant fairy, an obscene clown; but he is alive. I rather like Abie. Here he is: "Often Abie would drag an unsuspecting customer into his act. He preferred for stooges large Negresses, who would roll their eyes shyly; middle-aged matrons with foreign accents; or the very old, the half-deaf, the obviously genteel. But in a pinch anyone would do. 'Let me tell you, lady,' he would begin in the special tone that indicated 'fun,' while the rest of us began to gather around his section on pretended errands, 'this is the assblaster model—ASSBLASTER!' He would pause dramatically to shake a wire brush for cleaning suede shoes under the nose of his victim, at the same time smiling up at her his blandest smile. 'Good for cleaning the hair around the hole.'"

I don't think, however, that Leslie Fiedler yearns to be remembered as a successful writer of low comedy. He leaves us no escape, for in the jacket copy he has laid out the terms on which he believes himself to be operating: "If there is a common theme, it is declared in the title: the triumph of art, that is, of insight and understanding, of coherence and form, over the anarchy of feeling—and especially over self-pity and self-adulation." These are fine sentiments, but I could find little in the stories that could generously be considered triumphs of art, insight, understanding, coherence, or form though there was a good deal of plain anarchy of feeling. If I have found this worth commenting on at length, it is because of my dismay that a writer who is so useful as a critic should be so insensitive when it comes to his own work. The trouble, I think, is that Fiedler is a writer of fiction only by an effort of will, and that consequently even his most modest story must literally be a *tour de force*.

## II. Alfred Kazin and the Futurity Stakes

If Leslie Fiedler sometimes gives the impression of being a much more exciting fellow than he really is, Alfred Kazin often appears unaccountably duller than he really is. Perhaps this is due to the praise of some of his admirers who manage to treat him with reverence and at the same time leave the impression that he is an Edmund-Wilson-with-water. There is, of course, a re-

semblance. Both Wilson and Kazin tend to see literature in its social and psychological aspects, both are tremendously erudite, both are clear and precise writers, and both have loyal personal followings. There are also differences, the most obvious being that Kazin is sensitively and self-consciously Jewish while Wilson is sensitively and self-consciously Old American. Another clear difference is that while Wilson is essentially a maverick and outsider, Kazin manages to live and work comfortably within the world of academic lectures, State Department cultural missions, and articles for *Harper's*.

It was not, however, until I read Kazin's recent book, *Contemporaries* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, \$7.50), that I realized what a perceptive and tough-minded critic he is. The principal characteristic of this long book (dedicated to Wilson, by the way) is its sanity, and God knows that is a commodity in short enough supply these days. Although Kazin ranges from *Moby Dick* through his own experiences as a visiting lecturer in Germany, the central section for most readers is, I should guess, the selection of reviews he calls "Famous Since the War." This is as it should be, for we don't often have the chance to look at our current literary performers in such sharply defined perspective. At the risk of turning Kazin into a sort of handicapper in the Futurity Stakes, here is a sampling of his opinions:

*Lawrence Durrell*: "There are no sharp edges, no painful passions, no real losses, no hurts. People hop in and out of beds as if sex did nothing but induce gentle reflections on life."

*Dylan Thomas*: "But beyond these general considerations was the overwhelming single consideration of Dylan Thomas, who not only seemed more gifted, more eloquent, more joyous than any other poet of his generation, but was peculiarly available to all and everyone, so utterly without pose and literary pomp—he was always ragging his own poetry and, as he beerily filled out, the little barrel figure he made—that, alive, he was already 'Dylan' to every casual pub-mate and literary pick-me-up, with the impending appeal, winsome and rakish, of a Frank Sinatra."

*C. P. Snow*: "These novels are unusual, but they do not, as some of Snow's admirers often glibly suggest, offer a new technique to the English novel.... Snow's achievement is a tragic conception of life...."

*Philip Roth* (and, incidentally, *The New Yorker*): "Several weeks ago I was awakened, while reading *The New Yorker*, by Philip Roth's 'Defender of the Faith,' a story with such extraordinary guts to it that I went around for days exhilarated by the change in the literary weather."

*Norman Mailer* (*Advertisements for Myself*): "Mailer is a powerful, courageous talent... [but] like many another American radical, desperado, Reichian stalwart of sexual frankness, Norman Mailer has been driven crazy by an affluent and greasily accommodating society which not only doesn't oppose him but which turns even his disgust and frankness into a form of literary capital."

*Kenneth Rexroth*: "Groucho Marx screaming, 'I'd horsewhip you if I had a horse!' is really not much funnier than Kenneth Rexroth screaming in one poem against Henry Luce, *Mademoiselle*, T. S. Eliot, the Statue of Liberty, the liberal weeklies, the cocktail habit, Brooks Brothers, and the university quarterlies."

*J. D. Salinger*: "It is thin, and peculiarly heartbreak-ing at times; Salinger identifies the effort he puts out with the vaguely spiritual 'quest' on which his characters are engaged...." And again, "I am sorry to have to use the word 'cute' in respect to Salinger, but there is absolutely no other word that for me so accurately typifies the self-conscious charm and prankishness of his own writing and his extraordinary cherishing of his favorite Glass characters."

*Leslie Fiedler*: "He tells us that his essay on *Huckleberry Finn* has outraged the homosexuals, and adds—'This, I suspect, is success.' This may be success, but I'm afraid that it is only the kind of success that can come from such deliberate provocativeness—this air of talking, talking brightly, brashly, penetratingly, all the time, no matter what the subject or whom he embarrasses."

I could go on with pleasure, even though I disagree with half of Kazin's opinions. Go buy his book yourself.

KENNETH LAMOTT

#### A TAP OF THE HAMMER

Harvey Swados is a man of passion and rugged conscience. What's more, in *A Radical's America* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, \$5.00) he makes it pretty difficult for his reader not to be. His passion compels and his conscience reveals.

"There ought to be," he says, quoting Chekhov and apparently stating the purpose of this book, "behind the door of every happy, contented man, someone with a hammer, continuously reminding him with a tap that there are unhappy people." Swados reminds us of, among others, the rubber workers in Akron with so much leisure due to their short work-week that they hold down two jobs, miners who haven't even got one job, exurbanites, writers, youth, educated women. In fact, so unrelieved is the indictment of our society that one wonders behind whose door is who standing to tap whom?

This book is a collection of Swados' essays, published previously and singly in publications ranging from *Esquire* to *Dissent*, from *The Noble Savage* to *Atlantic Monthly*. The subject matter is even more various: "West Coast Waterfront: End of An Era"; "The Miners: Men Without Work"; "Popular Taste and *The Caine Mutiny*"; "Robinson Crusoe—the Man Alone." (A radical's America?) And come across one by one in their first homes, these essays would no doubt be entertaining, informing, and disquieting. For there is stuff here we should all be reminded of, and perceptions that are worth our sharing.

For example, in several of the essays Swados is concerned with the new plight of the worker. Rightly, I

think, he points out that with the great success of some of the larger unions, the country has lost interest in the labor movement. Yet many weak unions, such as the Textile Workers Union, are suffering failure after failure, injustice after injustice at the hands of the NLRB, employers and, in the last analysis, an indifferent American public.

And he is unhappy in advance because of the psychological changes automation will bring. In the coal-mining industry, where many thousands are even now idle, he regrets "the loss of fraternity, solidarity, and the comradeship of courageous accomplishment." On the West Coast waterfront, "Not only will the radical dissidents...be harder to find; so will the oddballs, the men with brains who liked to work with their hands, the occasional novelist, painter, philosopher whom one encountered on the waterfront because it was—as loyal union member Eric Hoffer put it to me—'a good place to talk and a good place to think, a mixture of physical and intellectual stimulation.'" That the changing labor front is a mixed blessing for the worker is a worthwhile reminder.

Yet despite the good things in this book, it has to be said that these essays don't quite satisfy as a whole. They are neither inclusive nor intensive explorations of a radical's America, and during the time it takes to read the 347 pages, one is struck by Swados' stance, which is determinedly Left, and by his ideas, which are often also a little bit off-center.

Swados spends an essay, entitled "Be Happy—Go Liberal", on Leslie Fiedler's exposition of the liberal's political guilt for being duped by the Communists in the Thirties and early Forties. Mr. Fiedler apparently credits "buffoons and bullies" for being right about the Soviet Union for the wrong reasons, while liberals were wrong, if for the right reasons. The essay so infuriates Swados that he uses it as a reason for divorcing himself from liberalism and calling himself a radical. The thrust of Swados' argument seems to be that liberals who confess culpability in going along with the Communists are really selling out to the bully boys of the Right who are still the real enemy. His final admonition is for those persons who are concerned with serious problems and making a better world to "leave liberalism to those who claim possession but warp its militant elements to fit a passive literary pattern of fashionable nuances serving only to conceal their own utter emptiness and prostration before the status quo."

My own opinion of the controversy is that Fiedler is right for the wrong reasons, and that Swados is wrong for the right reasons. Confession may help to straighten out one's thinking, but it is hardly a substitute for principle. Surely there must have been some soft-headed types who were *duped* by the Communists, and if Fiedler says he is one, that's his business. But this subject hardly sounds a clarion call to important duty. It is a clarion call to the good sport of taking out after Leslie Fiedler who took out after the "liberal dupes," himself included, who took out after the status quoers of the Thirties who took out after the radicals of the Depression and so forth.

But there are more important and disturbing essays in *A Radical's America*. Take "Popular Taste and the

Agonies of the Young." In it, Swados begins by asking why the Leopold-Loeb case has been used by novelists while the Sacco-Vanzetti case has not. Although I think there are many other possible explanations, I won't quarrel with Swados': that the Leopold-Loeb case has been a source for novelists because we are fascinated by the murky unconscious and the complexities of the human spirit, and that the Sacco-Vanzetti case is ignored because Americans are afraid of politics.

Along the way in this essay, he compares the Sacco-Vanzetti case with the Rosenberg case. In pointing out the difference between the two, he writes, "There was no felt need in the Twenties to deny that Sacco and Vanzetti were committed and dedicated anarchists. Nor was there a concomitant necessity for the defense to portray the two as innocent liberals." The times, he seems to say, have changed, very much for the worse. So be it, but does this comparison shed any light on the change?

In point of fact, the Sacco-Vanzetti case continues to horrify us precisely because their anarchy was implicit in the trial but totally irrelevant to the charge under which they were tried which was murder, pure and simple, for material gain. Whether they were anarchists had nothing to do with their guilt or innocence, but that they were anarchists had a great deal to do with their conviction. The discrepancy was the rallying cry. In the Rosenberg case, the defense attempted to portray the two as "innocent liberals" precisely because an adherence to Communism was closely relevant to the state's charge which was espionage. If the defense had admitted their Communism, it would have been admitting a possible motive for the crime.

It seems to me perfectly reasonable to discuss the guilt or innocence of the Rosenbergs—which, incidentally, Swados does not do—and to argue passionately about the severity of the sentence. But to equate by juxtaposition and implication the blatant miscarriage of justice in the Sacco-Vanzetti case with the conduct and conclusion of the Rosenberg case, and to use the comparison as a basis for a mass indictment of our politics, just won't do.

The Rosenbergs also figure in the essay on Fiedler, and now thinking of the two essays as a pair, I am made uneasy. In order to point up how absurd is Fiedler's—and more or less incidentally Diana Trilling's—*mea culpa*, Swados quotes Norbert Wiener to the effect that "...the dissemination of any scientific secret whatever is merely a matter of time, that in this game a decade is a long time, and that in the long run, there is no distinction between arming ourselves and arming our enemies."

Swados implies that the stolen secrets were hardly secret, hardly worth protecting, and that thus the hullabaloo was foolish on its face. Would Mr. Swados say that a burglar robbing a jewelry store was less guilty if he accidentally took paste instead of pearls? I am in no position to judge the value of the secrets, but surely it doesn't take a right-wing bully boy to see that the fact of espionage, the betrayal of trust, the arrogance and self-righteousness of the lawless, the disregard of national interest remain reprehensible whether the secrets were paste or pearls. Plead for a more certain case against the

spies, plead for a more forgiving society, plead for an open exchange of scientific information; but don't try to make a case that even if guilty the spies weren't wrong, bad criminals.

In some essays in this book, Swados has not put his admirable passion and conscience to their most appropriate use. •

NANCY HUDDLESTON PACKER

### THE BARBAROUS MALADY

Montaigne, in his essay on experience, said that "no knowledge is so hard to acquire as the knowledge of how to live this life well and naturally, and the most barbarous of our maladies is to despise our being."

Gina Berriault's new novel, *Conference of Victims*, (Atheneum, \$4.50) bulges with people who, for one reason or another, suffer from this malaise. Over them falls the long shadow of a suicide, and within that shadow they writhe in various attitudes of self-doubt and disesteem while the author plays her bright pencil-light of intuition and understanding over their troubled psyches; a female Dante in a Freudian purgatory.

Mrs. Berriault is an intensely serious novelist, and this is not a tale to be taken lightly. She has a strong sensibility towards the individual in this bomb- and neurosis-ridden age, as has been demonstrated in her prize-winning short stories and in her first novel, *The Descent*. *Conference of Victims* is, in my opinion, better than *The Descent*, largely because Mrs. Berriault writes far more convincingly of the emotions than she does of socio-political affairs. The new book's equal sombreness of tone may be because she feels with Brecht: "He who laughs has not yet heard the terrible tidings."

The suicide in the book is a young candidate for Congress named Hal O. Costigan. What ostensibly drives him to it is his apprehension by police while he is in a car making love to a 17-year-old girl who is not Mrs. Costigan. It means the end of his good reputation and his political career, and he decides to make it the end of his life as well.

Is this an action of bravery or of cowardice? Is it a reflection of his own inadequacies, or those of his mistress and his entire family? Is their reaction one of genuine grief for a loved one, or is it one of hatred for a man whose abrupt departure leaves his immediate circle with a heavy burden of guilt and resentment?

These are some of the questions Mrs. Berriault explores in a penetrating psychological study.

The girl soon finds that telling people about Hal's suicide over her (as she interprets it) makes her feel important and wanted; without it she would have to admit to never having been truly loved. She would become "nothing."

Hal's blind mother, slowly dying of "everything" as the story opens, can only believe that external circumstances caused her boy's death by his own hand; otherwise it would be unbearable to think that he "spat his life back in her face."

To his widow, Hal's death is something not to be faced in all its implications for her, nor are the sordid circumstances ever to be revealed to their young son.

But the one who suffers most from Hal's demise is his homely sister, Naomi, who has reason not to pity or love her brother. For one thing, his passing leaves her alone to care for their blind and crotchety mother. For another, she feels that "When he who had so much to make of it took his life, what crazy reason did she have for living hers?" Unmarried at 40, she envies her brother's family life, feels guilty for not having more pity for him. In a very affecting final chapter, Naomi goes to her dead brother's wife and tries to disgorge her hatred and frustration by telling the son the true circumstances of Hal's death. It's a beautifully written section, a short story in itself from which she and the reader emerge with a better understanding and acceptance of things as they are.

All of this, in Mrs. Berriault's hands, adds up to a most revealing examination, unblurred by fake tears, of the ambivalence of human feeling inspired by the dead. If emotionally less moving than James Agee's *A Death in the Family*, it is psychologically just as rewarding. Throughout, the author seems to be flipping a coin with love on one side, hatred on the other, and as with most coin tossings, it comes out about even in the end.

In their attitudes toward the suicide the principals pretend to mourn, and we see their own existence as a sort of suicide of the spirit, a resignation to Thoreau's "lives of quiet desperation." Naomi, the most venturesome of the lot, tries to avoid stagnation by picking up men in bars and going to hotel rooms with them—including



ing one man on the night of her brother's death who serves to numb the pain. In her loneliness, she even marries a thrice-divorced lush like a character out of a Nelson Algren novel and they carry on a poignant mockery of Venus and Bacchus.

Mrs. Berriault is a writer of turbulent feelings, and is still better at expressing them in scenes and episodes than at sustaining them over an entire novel. *Conference* seems to lack direction at first as we hopscotch from character to character. But we soon discover that she is not as much concerned with narrative continuity—with *what*—as she is with motivational probing or *why*.

I suppose one could quarrel with the philosophic content by arguing that the Costigan family is too self-pitying, too inclined to stew about things instead of doing anything to reshape their lives. They too readily accept their roles as victims. Or perhaps, as Eddie tells Portia in Elizabeth Bowen's *Death of the Heart*, there are some people who don't hurt any more than other people, but simply make more fuss, and the Costigans are among these.

As an artful and perceptive study of a twilight zone of human aspirations, I think *Conference of Victims* is to be strongly recommended; certainly for several true and powerfully written scenes, such as the beach-cottage end of a girl's affair with a married business man and the confrontation of Naomi and her brother's widow. Montaigne would have found it, as he would have found our self-despising era of nuclear abandon and moral abandonment, barbarous but fascinating. •

LUTHER NICHOLS

#### GOD SMILES UPON OUR WORK

*The American Establishment*, by Richard Rovere. (Harcourt, Brace and World, \$4.95)

There is no question but that journalists have a strong in-group loyalty. I've been going over the clips of Richard Rovere's book, and he certainly has had a friendly press. On the whole I think he has deserved it. There has been a lot of quite fulsome praise for the title article which simply isn't all that good. In fact, it is a rather gimmicky and very labored semi-hoax that never quite comes off. It would have been much better to have done the piece straight. There is an American Establishment and it would be possible to describe its functioning seriously and at considerable length. The country is run neither by the Masons nor the Mafia. It is, however, still run by the same kind of well-to-do Girondins and Physiocrats and enlightened, sceptical oligarchs who managed to put the symbol of their faith on the Great Seal of the United States where anybody who has a dollar bill can take a peek at it any time he wishes and draw from it new solace and inspiration—"ANNUIT CÆPTIS—NOVUS ORDO SECULORUM."

This is something neither H. L. Mencken nor Senator McCarthy ever understood. Long term power in the United States is characterized by responsibility and incon-

spicuousness. A McCarthy can insult the dignity of the Senate, a Harding can make the malefactors of great wealth ridiculous—but not indefinitely. Eventually the American Establishment makes its power felt. Of course it is an Establishment of "the Capitalist class." Its composition has changed little, relative to the rest of the country, from the little club of men who wrote the Constitution. Once upon a time Charles Beard's analysis of the class composition of that body had a scandalous effect on historical scholarship. Now everybody takes it for granted. Like all long-lived oligarchies it is remarkably open. Although most of its members have both wealth and power, neither are essential to admittance. The rich and strong who endure have always proffered "careers for all the talents." What is even more remarkable about the American oligarchy is that it is quick to recruit members from the ranks of its antagonists, the wealthy and powerful whose fathers were not responsible and inconspicuous, and, even more remarkably, from the ranks of self-made men. I have always wished that someone would do a really sound study of this genuine power elite. (C. Wright Mills, an ideologue, mistook the fraud for the reality.) I have always wished somebody would do an exhaustive study of the political and economic ramifications of the Wettin-Welf—"Windsor," families, too. There are so many sleepers like this lying around waiting for bright hard-working sociologists. The wealth of the British royal family is immense but trivial, still it's a subject for a fascinating book. The actual nature and function and personnel of the American Establishment is another matter. It is a startling tribute to its members that they have managed for two hundred years to preserve their inconspicuousness.

The rest of the essays in Rovere's book are mostly pieces done as Washington correspondent for *The New Yorker*. They have precisely the tone *The New Yorker* wants—tolerant, polite, and trenchant... Montaigne amongst the demagogues. This is exactly the opposite to Mencken's strategy, yet it can be just as devastating. The pieces on Sidney Hillman, Ickes, Sherman Adams are deadly—and they kill with good manners. In fact Rovere's manners are so well-bred that it depends entirely on your point of view what you decide he has been up to in his quiet appreciation of Arthur Hays Vandenberg. When you realize that there was a lot more than an obvious physical resemblance between Vandenberg and Harding—and then go back and read Mencken's great piece, "Gamalielese, Or the Prose Style of the President," you can grasp the special effectiveness of Rovere's methods.

The last section of the book is concerned mostly with questions arising out of the crises of conscience the Communist Party has precipitated in the public mind and the body politic. (Early on in the book there is a similar piece on the kept witnesses of the FBI and the investigating committees which is possibly the most judicious of them all.) By and large I agree with everything Rovere says, but I do wish it was no longer necessary to say it. There is a whole complex of vital organs of the American body politic which the Communist issue has invaded like

a cancer. Uninhibited civil liberty is a kind of lymph on which the internal hygiene of the country is dependent. As long as this vital fluid is cluttered up with issues such as the right of Gus Hall to mislead school children, it is prevented from performing its essential function. I know there is no answer to this dilemma. Gus Hall is an undesirable baby whom we can't throw out because with him we'll have to throw out the all-important bath. Still, I do so wish he'd go away. And good God! I'm tired of reading about Hollywood's swimming pool Soviets, venal intellectuals, hatchet men and apparatchiks. 'Tis well an old age is out and time to begin a new. •

KENNETH REXROTH

### THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1962

Not for one moment did I ever believe W. C. Fields was dead, and so I kept waiting, patiently, for some sign of life from him. Finally, it came when a man, allegedly named T. Lamar Caudle, a high official of the Internal Revenue Service, was caught taking bribes and sent to jail. When I read about T. Lamar Caudle, I knew instantly that Fields was still living, for who else but the master could have given a name like T. Lamar Caudle to a bribe-taking Internal Revenue Service official?

But it is my shame that I did not recognize the second indicator of Fields' continued existence nearly as quickly, although I know now, in retrospect, that it should have been just as obvious to me. However, I am so delighted that my hero is playing another role, I am in no mood

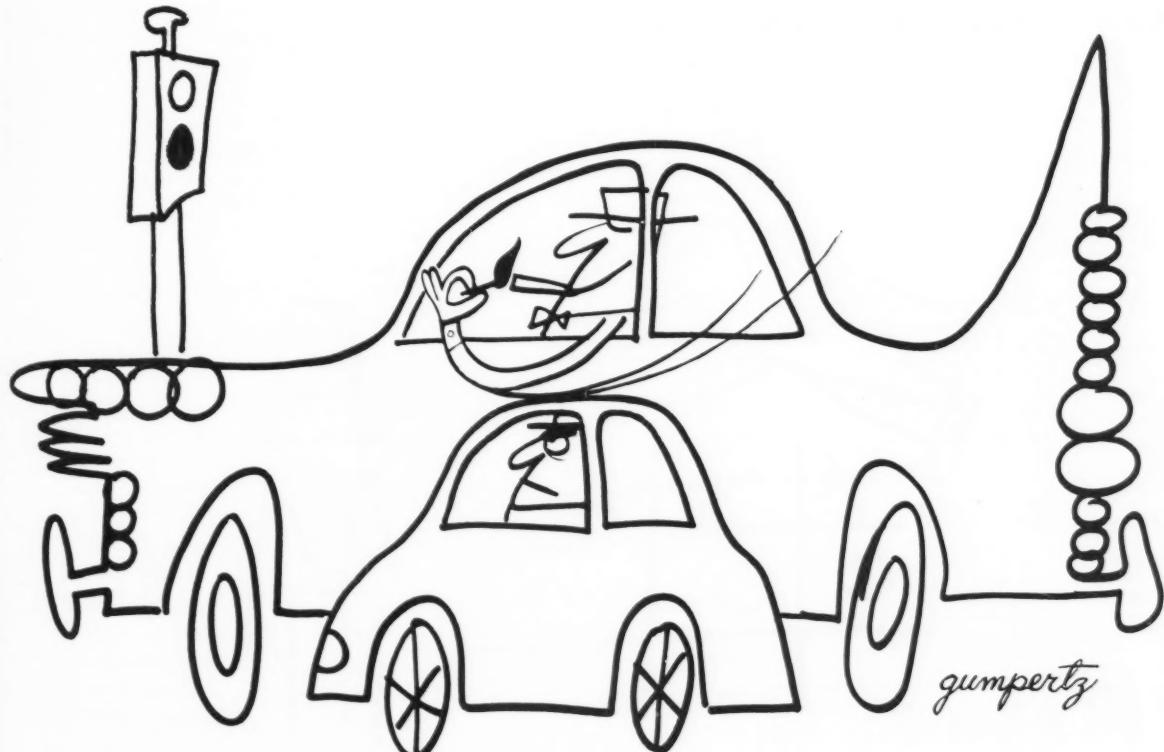
for self-flagellation; since I discovered that Leon Uris is really W. C. Fields, I am content once more.

I had been suspicious about the reality of Uris for a long time, but it was not until recently that I connected him with Fields. My initial doubts arose when I read a book called *Exodus*, for I thought that surely no writer could maintain the level of trash so consistently as was done there. But then it occurred to me that, perhaps, some extremely gifted person had written *Exodus* as a parody on the kind of best-selling book for which there is a guaranteed market in the United States: a nice fat book with lots of good guys—in this case, strong, heroic Jews, all twelve feet tall who went into battle bravely chanting from the Bible as they fought the bad guys—Arabs, who were only three feet high, cockeyed, and with snot running from their treacherous noses as a dozen of them raped an Israeli girl.

And if this wasn't enough, there was also a beautiful Christian girl in the book and plenty of highfalutin screwing on a mountain top.

Even after I met Uris—or someone claiming to be him—for a fleeting moment at a cocktail party his publishers gave for him, I was not sure of his identity. Then, slowly, over a period of months, things began falling into place.

An important clue came to me when I read an interview with Uris concerning the Israeli naval officer who had actually commanded the real *Exodus*. A New York newspaper had queried the Israeli, then studying at a university, about his reactions to the Uris version of the



events in which the captain had participated. Very politely, I thought, considering what he might have said, the Israeli commented that the book was neither good history nor a good novel. To this, Uris retorted with something like, "Captain who? I never heard of him. Tell him to check the bestseller lists if he wants to know what kind of a book I wrote."

What a master stroke for Fields! Now, as I look back, I see so clearly that only *he*, playing the role of an illiterate oaf who had written a bestseller, could possibly have issued such a statement.

After *Exodus* came *MILA 18*, another book published under the name of Uris. Although it hardly seemed possible, this book was even worse than *Exodus*, and for a little while, I—stupid I—was walking around in very bad humor. Depressed, I had visions of a whole series of Uris books being published—all immediately being made into movies. There would be one about the Dreyfus case in which Brigitte Bardot would play Mrs. Dreyfus; another would feature Paul Muni voicing sage aphorisms as Theodor Herzl; and possibly, God forbid, there would even be one written about the Spanish Inquisition—a great saga, done in color, with Rock Hudson as Spinoza.

As if we Jews didn't have enough trouble, I mused, now we have to be saddled with Leon Uris to prostitute and profane our history.

But these gloomy and serious thoughts were dispelled as soon as I discovered that Uris had opened a bookstore in Los Angeles called Exodus. It was then that I began to suspect the truth, and began haunting the toy shops looking for a line of Exodus dolls, or poking through the frozen food displays searching for Exodus brand creplach.

Then the next signpost came. It was during the Los Angeles trial of a bookdealer who had been arrested for

selling *Tropic of Cancer*. Uris appeared as a witness for the prosecution, denouncing Henry Miller for being obscene. Here, Fields outdid anything he had ever played before. It was a stroke of genius to have the popular and successful trashwriter attacking a serious writer for "obscenity." Still, I must confess my shame—even after I read about Uris' testimony, I was not yet convinced that he did not exist.

But the proof came when shortly after the *Tropic's* trial was over, a friend of mine, not knowing the truth, cancelled her account at the Exodus bookstore because of Uris' testimony against Miller. A few days later, she received a letter from Uris which said:

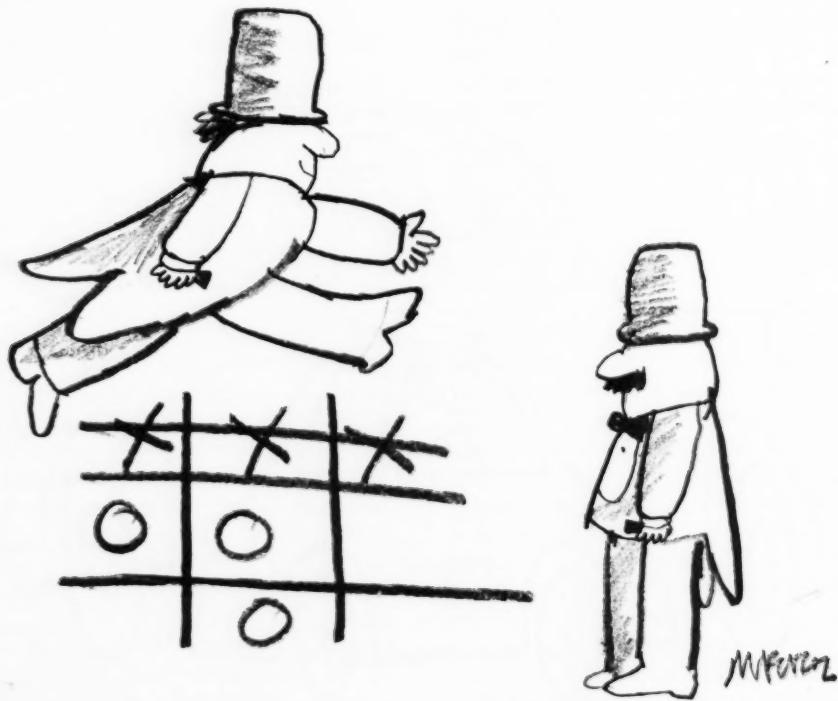
I do not recall of having ever read or heard mention of your name in connection with any facet of publishing, writing, literary criticism or literary teaching.

I have no objection to you expressing your opinion as a citizen but you are indeed presumptuous when you seek to pass yourself off as either a qualified or competent judge of literature.

The instant I read that letter, the truth bowled me over. It was W. C. Fields again, alive. For who else but he, pretending to be an illiterate author, could possibly have created a sentence like: "I do not recall of having ever read or heard mention of your name . . ."? No writer could have done this, not even a very, very bad one like Leon Uris. And who else but Fields could have conceived of an occupation titled, "literary teaching"?

So I am at ease again. Just as T. Lamar Caudle was, so Leon Uris is a sure sign to me that W. C. Fields is still alive. •

PAUL JACOBS



It is summertime,  
The hanging time,  
Bread is dear  
And last year's wine  
Almost gone  
And a poor harvest  
Not yet in.  
Three weeks ago  
Mondre's sow  
Ate a child.  
The mother saw  
This thing, and heard  
The farrows squeal,  
Too terrified  
To share the meal.  
Mother with infant,  
Beggar and mayor,  
Pickpock, pimp,  
And the town whore  
Have come to see  
The infliction of  
The court's decree.  
A creaking wheel  
Over the stones,  
And drawn by a mule  
The cart comes.  
Squealing, head down,  
With pinioned feet  
Pushing in air  
Against her fate,  
The sow must hear  
In a clerk's Latin  
The stumbling sentence.  
The drum is beaten,  
The crowd hushed,  
The sow stripped  
Of the ragged dress,  
Revealing whipped  
And branded hams.  
Now she is lifted  
Up in air;  
The noose catches  
on her ear,  
But the hangman  
Slips it down,  
And again  
Her feet are kicking.  
Mondre shouts  
That all may hear  
He is glad  
The end is near  
For this mad  
Rebellious sow.  
Summer thickens;  
The fly and the crow  
Come to gather  
All they can.

Soon the hard  
Descending Fall.  
Not on earth  
And not in heaven,  
The animal  
Must slowly rot  
With no good wishes  
And one *bon mot*:  
"In God's world  
A pig receives  
The ceremony  
A pig deserves."

PHILIP LEVINE

***l'homme et la bête***

## omens

For a long while, we told ourselves  
That the omen was good—the ocean was  
Getting warmer. We got into the habit  
Of thinking our civilization was moving into  
A new serenity—calm waves, warm water—  
Even an influx of sharks into our bay  
Was welcome.

That winter, for the first time  
There was no snow. Someone got us to plant  
Seedling palms and we thought of plowing up  
Our wheat to turn our valleys into citrus  
Orchards.

When our children darkened  
In the sun, we began to whisper that  
The old gone garden was come round  
Again, or soon would come. Someone recalled  
An ancient prophecy that said the serpent  
Would recoil upon himself before

That garden would spring up around us, and  
Indeed, the common garden snakes died out  
In that strange winter.

Slowly, we began  
To think of innocence again. The warmth  
Of spring was like a noonday dream; we dozed  
Like unripe fruit beneath the sun. We put  
Our furs away, our woolen suits, and learned  
To sleep in linen, lightly, with our palms  
Curled together.

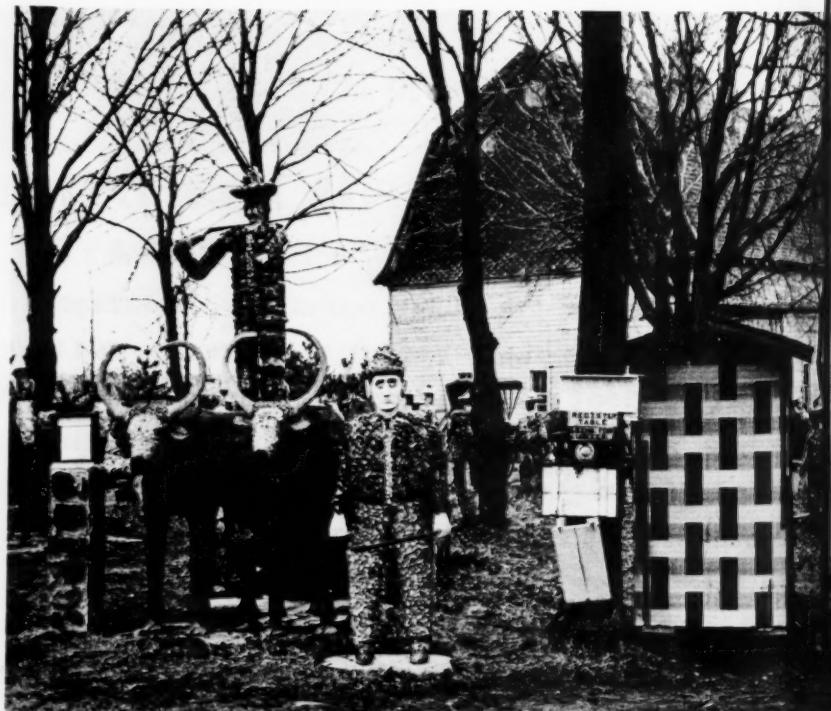
When strident parrots came,  
Early in the summer to the public  
Squares, we did not mind their quarrels with  
The frightened pigeons. Even the sudden flight  
Into our northern city of flamingos  
We received with joy. All things appeared  
Benign. For a moment, also, the  
Volcano that one morning thrust its cone  
Innocently skyward in the bay.

LEONARD WOLF



## **FRED SMITH AND HIS CEMENT FRIENDS PHILLIPS, WISCONSIN / PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT AMFT**

This work just came to me naturally, I started one day in 1950 and have been doing a few a year ever since. Have about 190 now. First I make a footing about one foot deep and pour concrete in it. The figures are started with couple of strips of lumber which I wrap with mink or barb wire. The arms and hands are made separately. After the form is made I begin filling it in with cement. I do half of it lying down, and then I raise it on the footing and do the remainder after it is standing up. Then the heads, arms, and hands are erected to the form. It is then dressed with colored glass and other bits of things. I welcome visitors. I like to watch their reactions. But I never tell any 'cause that might spoil it for others." • • • • • • • • • • •







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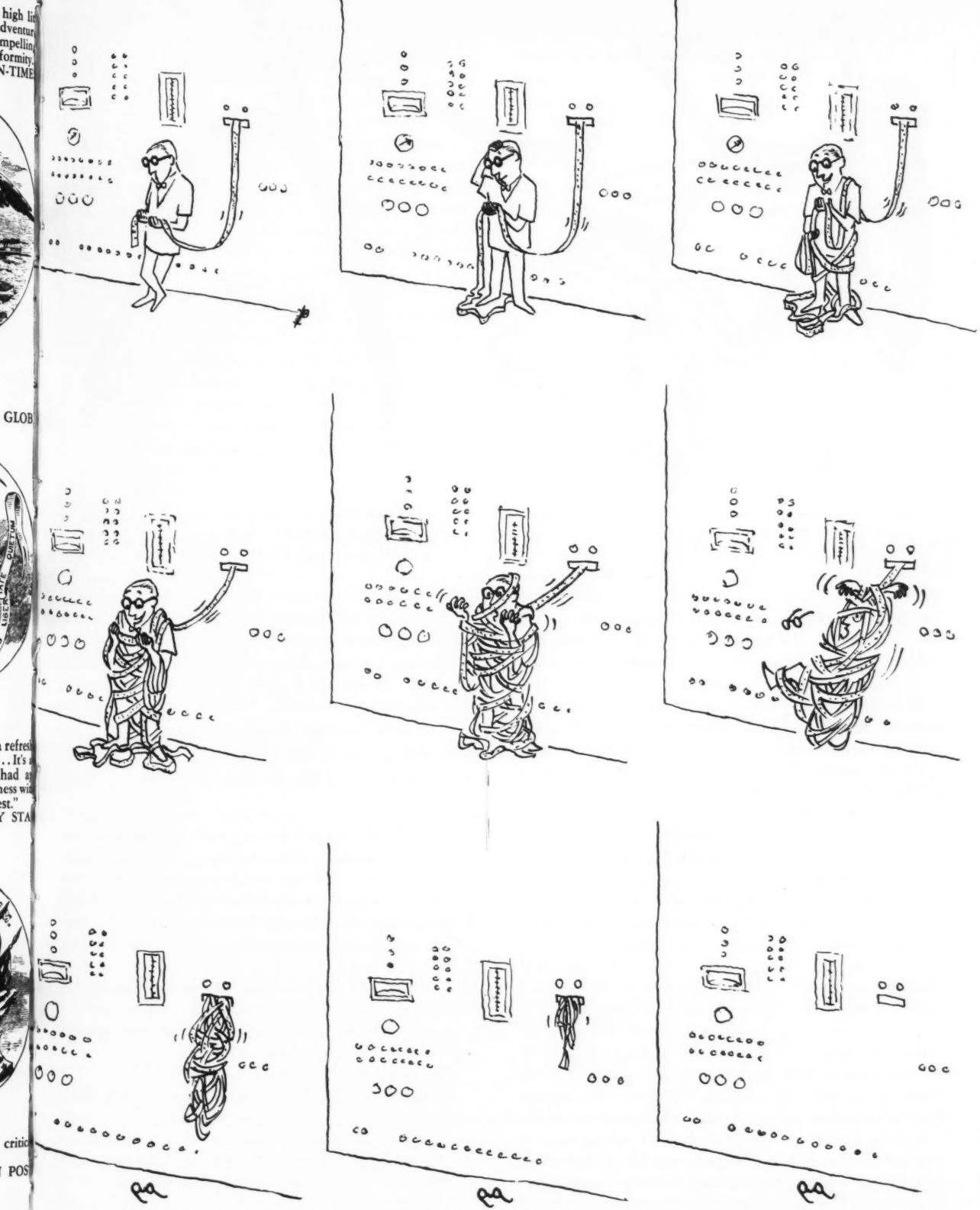
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THE BAIT





## FOOD FOR ALL HIS DEAD / BY FRANK CHIN

"Jus' forty-fie year 'go, Doctah Sun Yat-sen free China from da Manchus. Dat's why all us Chinee, alla ovah da woil are celebrate Octob' tan or da Doubloo Tan . . .!"

The shouted voice came through the open bathroom window. The shouting and music was still loud after rising through the night's dry air; white moths jumped on the air, danced through the window over the voice, and lighted quickly on the wet sink, newly reddened from his father's attack. Johnny's arms were around his father's belly, holding the man upright against the edge of the sink to keep the man's mouth high enough to spit lung blood into the drain.

The man's belly shrank and filled against Johnny's arms as the man breathed and spat, breathed and spat, the belly shrinking and filling. The breaths and bodies against each other shook with horrible rhythms that could not be numbed out of Johnny's mind. "Pride," Johnny thought, "Pa's pride for his reputation for doing things . . . except dying. He's not proud of dying, so it's a secret between father and son . . ." At the beginning of the man's death, then he had been Johnny's father, still commanding and large, saying, "Help me. I'm dying; don't tell," and removing his jacket and walking to the bathroom. Then came the grin—pressed lips twisted up into the cheeks—hiding the gathering blood and drool. Johnny had cried then, knowing his father would die. But now the man seemed to have been always dying and

Johnny always waiting, waiting with what he felt was a coward's loyalty to the dying, for he helped the man hide his bleeding and was sick himself, knowing he was not waiting for the man to die but waiting for the time after death when he could relax.

" . . . free from da yoke of Manchu slab'ry, in'epon'ence, no moah queue on da head! Da's wha'fo' dis big a parade! An' here, in San Francisco, alla us Chinee—'mellican 're pwowd! . . ."

It's all gone . . . I can't spit any more. Get my shirt, boy. I'm going to make a speech tonight. . . ." The man slipped from the arms of the boy and sat on the toilet lid and closed his mouth. His bare chest shone as if washed with dirty cooking oil and looked as if he should have been chilled, not sweating, among the cold porcelain and tile of the bathroom.

To the sound of herded drums and cymbals, Johnny wiped the sweat from his father's soft body and dressed him without speaking. He was full of the heat of wanting to cry for his father but would not.

His father was heavier outside the house.

They staggered each other across the alleyway to the edge of Portsmouth Square. They stood together at the top of the slight hill, their feet just off the concrete onto the melted fishbone grass, and could see the brightly lit reviewing stand, and they saw over the heads of the crowd, the dark crowd of people standing in puddles of each

other, moving like oily things and bugs floating on a tide; to their left, under trees, children played and shouted on swings and slides; some ran toward Johnny and his father and crouched behind their legs to hide from giggling girls. And they could see the street and the parade beyond the crowd. The man stood away from the boy but held tightly to Johnny's arm. The man swallowed a greasy sound and grinned. "I almost feel I'm not dying now. Parades are like that. I used to dance the Lion Dance in China, boy. I was always in the parades."

Johnny glanced at his father and saw the man's eyes staring wide with the skin around the eyes stretching for the eyes to open wider, and Johnny patted his father's shoulder and watched the shadows of children running across the white sand of the play area. He was afraid of watching his father die here; the man was no longer like his father or a man; perhaps it was the parade. But the waiting, the lies and waiting, waiting so long with a flesh going to death that the person was no longer real as a life but a parody of live things, grinning. The man was a fish drying and shrinking inside its skin on the sand, crazy, mimicking swimming, Johnny thought, but a fish could be lifted and slapped against a stone, thrown to cats; for his father, Johnny could only wait and help the man stay alive without helping him die. "That's probably where you got the disease," Johnny said.

"Where, boy?"

"Back in China."

"No, I got it here. I was never sick for one day in China." The man began walking down the hill toward the crowd. "Back in China . . ."

They walked down the hill, the man's legs falling into steps with his body jerking after his falling legs; Johnny held his father, held the man back to keep him from falling over his own feet. The man's breath chanted dry and powdered out of his mouth and nostrils to the rhythm of the drums, and his eyes stared far ahead into the parade; his lips opened and showed brickcolored teeth in his grin. "Not so fast, *ah-bah!*" Johnny shouted and pulled at his father's arm. He was always frightened at the man's surges of nervous life.

"Don't run," Johnny said, feeling his father's muscles stretch as he pulled Johnny down the hill toward the crowd. "Stop running, pa!" And his father was running and breathing out fog into the hot night and sweating dirty oil, and trembling his fleshy rump inside his baggy trousers, dancing in stumbles with dead senses. "Pa, not so fast, dammit! You're going to have another attack! Slow down!"

"I can't stop, boy."

They were in the shadow of the crowd now, and children chased around them.

"Look! There they are!" the man said.

*"Dere you're, ladies and genullmans! Eben da lion are bow in respack to us tonigh'!"*

The crowd clapped and whistled, and boys shoved forward to see. Old women, roundbacked in their black overcoats, lifted their heads to smile; they stood together

and nodded, looking like clumps of huge beetles with white faces.

"Closer to the platform, boy; that's where I belong," the man said. He leaned against Johnny's shoulder and coughed out of his nostrils. Johnny heard the man swallow and cringed. The man was grinning again, his eyes anxious, the small orbs jumping scared spiders all over the sockets. "Aren't you happy you came, boy? Look at all the people."

"Take time to catch your breath, *ah-bah*. Don't talk. It's wrong for you to be here anyhow."

"Nothing's wrong, boy, don't you see all your people happy tonight? As long as . . ." he swallowed and put his head against Johnny's cheek, then made a sound something like laughter, "as I've been here . . . do you understand my Chinese?" Then slowly in English, catching quick breaths between his words, "I be here, allabody say dere chillren're gonna leab Chinatong and go way, but 'snot so, huh?" His voice was low, a gutteral monotone. "Look a'em all; dey still be Chinee. I taught da feller dat teach dem to dance how to do dat dancer, boy. Johnny? Please, dis're you home, here, an' I know you gat tire, but alla you fran's here, an' dey likee you." His face was speaking close to Johnny and chilled the boy's face with hot breath.

The boy did not look at his father talking to him, but stared stiffly out to the street, watching the glistening arms of boys jerking the bamboo skeletons of silk-hided lions over their heads. His father was trying to save him again, Johnny thought, trying to be close like he had been to him how long ago when his father was a hero from the war. The man spoke as if he had saved his life to talk to his son now, tonight, here among the eyes and sounds of Chinese.

"I'm sorry, *ah-bah*, I can't help it . . ." was all Johnny could answer sincerely. He knew it would be cruel to say, "Pa, I don't want to be a curiosity like the rest of the Chinese here. I want to be something by myself," so he did not, not only because of the old man, but because he was not certain he believed himself; it had been easy to believe his own shouted words when he was younger and safe with his parents; it had been easy not to like what he had then—when he knew he could stay; then, when the man was fat and not dying, they were separate and could argue, but not now; now he was favored with the man's secret; they were horribly bound together now. The old man was dying and still believing in the old ways, still sure—even brave, perhaps—and that meant something to Johnny.

*"An' you see dam bow in respack now, and' da's good lucks to ev'eybody!"*

The lion dancers passed, followed by a red convertible with boys beating a huge drum on the back seat.

Johnny knew the parades; the lion dancers led the wait for the coming of the long dragon, and the end. The ends of the parades with the dragon were the most exciting, were the loudest moment before the chase down the streets to keep the dragon in sight. He was half aware of the air becoming brittle with the noise of the dances

and the crowd, and, with his father now, was almost happy, almost anxious, dull, the way he felt when he was tired and staring in a mirror, slowly realizing that he was looking at his own personal reflection; he felt pleased and depressed, as if he had just prayed for something.

"You know," the man said, "I wan' you to be somebody here. Be doctor, mak' moneys and halp da Chinee, or lawyer, or edgenerer, make moneys and halp, and people're respack you." He patted the boy's chest. "You tell me now you won' leab here when I die, hokay?"

"I don't know, pa." The boy looked down to the trampled grass between his feet and shrugged off what he did not want to say. They were hopeless to each other now. He looked over his shoulder to his father and could not answer the chilled face; and they stared a close moment onto each other and were private, holding each other and waiting.

Policemen on motorcycles moved close to the feet of the crowd to move them back. The boys wearing black-and-red silk trousers and white sweatshirts, coaxing the clumsy dragon forward with bells and shafts could be seen now; they were dancing and shouting past the reviewing stand. The dragon's glowing head lurched side to side, rose and fell, its jaw dangling after the goading boys. As the dragon writhed and twisted about itself, boys jumped in and out from under its head and belly to keep the dragon fresh.

"Maybe I'm not Chinese, pa! Maybe I'm just a Chinese accident. You're the only one that seems to care that I'm Chinese." The man glared at the boy and did not listen. "Pa, most of the people I don't like are Chinese. They even *laugh* with accents, Christ!" He turned his head from the man, sorry for what he said. It was too late to apologise.

"You dare talk to your father like that?" the man shouted in Chinese. He stood back from the boy, raised himself and slapped him, whining through his teeth as his arm swung heavily toward the boy's cheek. "You're no son of mine! No son! I'm ashamed of you!"

The shape of the bamboo skeleton was a shadow within the thinly painted silk of the dragon, and boys were shouting inside.

"Pa, ah-bah, I'm sorry."

"Get me up to the platform, I gotta make a speech."

"Pa, you've got to go home."

"I'm not dead yet; you'll do as I say."

"All right, I'll help you up because you won't let me help you home. But I'll leave you up there, pa. I'll leave you for ma and sister to bring home."

*"From da Pres'den, of da United State' 'mellica! To alla ob da Chinee'-mellican on da celebrate ob dere liberate from da Manchu..."*

"I'm trying to make you go home for your own good."

"You're trying to kill me with disgrace. All right, leave me. Get out of my house, too."

"Pa, I'm trying to help you. You're dying!" The boy reached for his father, but the man stepped away. "You'll kill ma by not letting her take care of you."

"Your mother's up on the platform waiting for me."

"Because she doesn't know how bad you are. I do. I have a right to make you go home."

"It's my home, not yours. Leave me alone." The man walked the few steps to the edge of the platform and called his wife. She came down and helped him up. She glanced out but did not see Johnny in the crowd. Her cheeks were made up very pink and her lipstick was still fresh; she looked very young next to Johnny's father, but her hands were old, and seemed older because of the bright nail polish and jade bracelet.

Johnny knew what his father would tell his mother and knew he would have to trust them to be happy without him. Perhaps he meant he would have to trust himself to be happy without them...the feeling would pass; he would wait and apologize to them both, and he would not have to leave, perhaps. Everything seemed wrong, all wrong, yet, everyone, in his own way, was right. He turned quickly and walked out of the crowd to the children's play area. He sat on a bench and stretched his legs straight out in front of him. The dark old women in black coats stood by on the edges of the play area watching the nightbleached faces of children flash in and out of the light as they ran through each other's shadows. Above him, Johnny could hear the sound of pigeons in the trees. Chinatown was the same and he hated it now. Before, when he was younger, and went shopping with his mother, he had enjoyed the smells of the shops and seeing colored toys between the legs of walking people; he had been proud to look up and see his mother staring at the numbers on the scales that weighed meat to see the shopkeepers smile and nod at her. And at night, he had played here, like the children chasing each other in front of him now.

"What'sa wrong, Johnny? Tire?" He had not seen the girl standing in front of him. He sat up straight and smiled. "You draw more pitchers on napkin for me tonigh'?"

"No, I was with pa." He shrugged. "You still got the napkins, huh?"

"I tolle you I want dem. I'm keeping 'em." She wore a short white coat over her red *cheongsam* and her hair shook down over her face from the wind.

"I wanna walk," he said. "You wanna walk?"

"I gotta gat home before twalve."

"Me too."

"I'll walk for you dan, okay?" She smiled and reached a hand down for him.

"You'll walk *with* me, not *for* me. You're not a dog." He stood and took her hand. He enjoyed the girl; she listened to him; he did not care if she understood what he said or knew what he wanted to say. She listened to him, would listen with her eyes staring with a wide frog's stare until he stopped speaking, then her body would raise and she would sigh a curl of girl's voice and say, "You talk so nice..."

The tail of an embroidered dragon showed under her white coat and seemed to sway as her thigh moved. "You didn't come take me to the parade, Johnny?"

"I was with pa." Johnny smiled. The girl's hand was dryfeeling, cold and dry like a skin of tissue-paper cov-

ered flesh. They walked slowly, rocking forward and back as they stepped up the hill. "I'm always with pa, huh?" he said bitterly, "I'm sorry."

"'sall right. Is he still dying?"

"Everyone's dying here; it's called the American's common cold."

"Don't talk you colleger stuff to me! I don' unnerstan' it, Johnny."

"He's still dying ... always. I mean, sometimes I think he won't die or is lying and isn't dying."

"Wou'n't that be good, if he weren't dying? And if it was all a joke? You could all laugh after."

"I don't know, Sharon!" He whined on the girl's name and loosened her hand, but she held.

"Johnny?"

"Yeah?"

"What'll you do if he dies?"

Johnny did not look at the girl as he answered, but lifted his head to glance at the street full of lights and people walking between moving cars. Grant Avenue. He could smell incense and caged squabs, the dank smell of damp fish heaped on tile from the shops now. "I think I'd leave. I know what that sounds like, like I'm waiting for him to die so I can leave; maybe it's so. Sometimes I think I'd kill him to stop all this waiting and lifting him to the sink and keeping it a secret. But I won't do that."

"You won' do that ..." Sharon said.

*"An' now, I like to presan' da Presden' ob da Chinee Benabolen' ..."*

"My father," Johnny said.

The girl clapped her hands over her ears to keep her hair from jumping in the wind. "You father?" she said.

"I don't think so," Johnny said. They walked close to the walls, stepped almost into doorways to allow crowding people to pass them going down the hill toward the voice. They smelled grease and urine of open hallways, and heard music like birds being strangled as they walked over iron gratings.

"You don't think so what?" Sharon asked, pulling him toward the crowd.

"I don't think so what you said you didn't think so ..." He giggled, "I'm sort of funny tonight. I was up all last night listening to my father practice his speech in the toilet and helping him bleed when he got mad. And this morning I started to go to classes and fell asleep on the bus; so I didn't go to classes, and I'm still awake. I'm not tired but kind of stupid with no sleep, dig, Sharon?"

The girl smiled and said, "I dig, Johnny. You the same way every time I see you almos'."

"And I hear myself talking all this stupid stuff, but it's sort of great, you know? Because I have to listen to what I'm saying or I'll miss it."

"My mother say you cute."

They were near the top of the street now, standing in front of a wall stand with a fold-down shelf covered with Chinese magazines, nickel comic books, postcards and Japanese souvenirs of Chinatown. Johnny, feeling ridiculous with air between his joints and his cheeks tingling with the anxious motion of the crowd, realized he was

tired, then realized he was staring at the boy sitting at the wall stand and staring at the boy's leather cap.

"What are you loo' at, huh?" the boy said in a girl's voice. Sharon pulled at Johnny and giggled. Johnny giggled and relaxed to feeling drunk and said:

"Are you really Chinese?"

"What're you ting, I'm a Negro soy sauce chicken?"

"Don't you know there's no such thing as a real Chinaman in all of America? That all we are are American Indians cashing in on a fad?"

"Fad? Don' call me fad. You fad youself."

"No, you're not Chinese, don't you understand? You see it all started when a bunch of Indians wanted to quit being Indians and fighting the cavalry and all, so they left the reservation, see?"

"In'ian?"

"And they saw that there was this big kick about Chinamen, so they braided their hair into queues and opened up laundries and restaurants and started reading Margaret Mead and Confucius and Pearl Buck and became respectable Chinamen and gained some self-respect."

"Chinamong! You bettah not say Chinamong."

"But the reservation instinct stuck, years of tradition, you see? Something about needing more than one Indian to pull off a good rain dance or something, so they made Chinatown! And here we are!"

He glanced around him and grinned. Sharon was laughing, her shoulders hopping up and down. The boy blinked then pulled his cap lower over his eyes. "It's all right to come out now, you see?" Johnny said. "Indians are back in vogue and the Chinese kick is wearing out ..." He laughed until he saw the boy's confused face. "Aww nuts," he said, "this is no fun."

He walked after Sharon through the crowd, not feeling the shoulders and women's hips knocking against him. "I'd like to get outta here so quick, Sharon; I wish I had something to do! What do I do here? What does anybody do here? I'm bored! My mother's a respected woman because she can tell how much monosodium glutamate is in a dish by smelling it, and because she knows how to use a spittoon in a restaurant. Everybody's Chinese here, Sharon."

"Sure!" the girl laughed and hopped to kiss his cheek. "Did'n' you like that?"

"Sure, I liked it, but I'm explaining something. You know, nobody shoulda let me grow up and go to any school outside of Chinatown." They walked slowly, twisting to allow swaggering men to pass. "Then, maybe everything would be all right now, you see? I'm stupid, I don't know what I'm talking about. I shouldn't go to parades and see all those kids. I remember when I was a kid. Man, then I knew everything. I knew all my aunts were beautiful, and all my cousins were small, and all my uncles were heroes from the war and the strongest guys in the world that smoked cigars and swore, and my grandmother was a queen of women." He nodded to himself. "I really had it made then, really, and I knew more then than I do now."

"What'dya mean? You smart now! You didn't know how to coun' or spall, or nothin'; now you in colleger."

"I had something then, you know? I didn't have to ask about anything; it was all there; I didn't have questions, I knew who I was responsible to, who I should love, who I was afraid of, and all my dogs were smart."

"You lucky, you had a dog!" The girl smiled.

"And all the girls wanted to be nurses; it was fine! Now, I'm just what a kid should be—stupid, embarrassed. I don't know who can tell me anything."

"Here, in Chinatown, I'm undoubtedly the most enlightened, the smartest fortune cookie ever baked to a golden brown, but out there...God!" He pointed down to the end of Grant Avenue, past ornamented lamps of Chinatown to the tall buildings of San Francisco. "Here, I'm fine—and bored stiff. Out there—Oh, Hell, what'm I talking about. You don't know either; I try to tell my father, and he doesn't know, and he's smarter'n you."

"If you don't like stupids, why'd you talk to me so much?"

"Because I like you. You're the only thing I know that doesn't fight me... You know I think I've scared myself into liking this place for awhile. See what you've done by walking with me? You've made me a good Chinese for my parents again. I think I'll sell firecrackers." He was dizzy now, overwhelmed by the sound of too many feet and clicking lights. "I even like you, Sharon!" He swung her arm and threw her ahead of him and heard her laugh. "Christ! my grandmother didn't read English until she watched television and read 'The End'; that's pretty funny, what a kick!" They laughed at each other and ran among the shoulders of the crowd, shouting "Congratulations!" in Chinese into the shops, "Congratulations!" to a bald man with long hair growing down the edges of his head.

"Johnny, stop! You hurt my wrist!"

It was an innocent kiss in her hallway, her eyes closed so tight the lashes shrank and twitched like insect legs, and her lips puckered long a dry kiss with closed lips. "Goodnight, Johnny... John," she said. And he waved and watched her standing in the hallway, disappearing as he walked down the stairs; then, out of sight, he ran home.

He opened the door to the apartment and hoped that his father had forgotten. "Fine speech, pa!" he shouted.

His little sister came out of her room, walking on the toes of her long pajamas. "Brother? Brother, ah-bah, he's sick!" she said. She looked straight up to Johnny as she spoke and nodded. Johnny stepped past his sister and ran to the bathroom and opened the door. His mother was holding the man up to the sink with one hand and holding his head with the other. The man's mess spattered over her *cheongsam*. The room, the man, everything was uglier because of his mother's misery in her bright *cheongsam*. "Ah-bah?" Johnny said gently as if calling the man from sleep for dinner. They did not turn. He stepped up behind the woman. "I can do that, ah-mah, I'm a little stronger than you."

"Don't you touch him! You!" She spoke with her cheek against the man's back and her eyes closed. "He told me what you did, what you said, and you're killing

him! If you want to leave, just go! Stop killing this man!"

"Not me, ma. He's been like this a long time. I've been helping him almost every night. He told me not to tell you."

"You think I don't know? I've seen you in here with him when I wanted to use the bathroom at night, and I've crept back to bed without saying anything because I know your father's pride. And you want to go and break it in a single night! First it's your telling everybody how good you are! Now go and murder your father..."

"Ma, I'm sorry. He asked me, and I tried to make him understand. What do you want me to do, lie? I'll call a doctor."

"Get out, you said you're going to leave, so get out," the man said, lifting his head.

"I'll stay, ma, ah-bah, I'll stay."

"It's too late," his mother said, "I don't want you here." The time was wrong... nobody's fault that his father was dying; perhaps, if his father was not dying out of his mouth Johnny could have argued and left or stayed, but now, he could not stay without hate. "Ma, I said I'm calling a doctor..."

After the doctor came, Johnny went to his room and cried loudly, pulling the sheets from his bed and kicking at the wall until his foot became numb. He shouted his hate for his father and ignorant mother into his pillow until his face was wet with tears. His sister stood next to his bed and watched him, patting his ankle and saying over and over, "Brother, don't cry brother..."

Johnny sat up and held the small girl against him. "Be a good girl," he said. "You're going to have my big room now. I'm moving across the bay to school." He spoke very quietly to his sister against the sound of their father's spitting.

Sharon held his sister's elbow and marched behind Johnny and his mother. A band played in front of the coffin, and over the coffin was a large photograph of the dead man. Johnny had a miniature of the photograph in his wallet and would always carry it there. Without being told, he had dressed and was marching now beside his mother behind the coffin and the smell of sweet flowers. It was a parade of black coats and hats, and they all wore sunglasses against the sun; the sky was green, seen through the glasses, and the boys playing in Portsmouth Square had green shadows about them. A few people stopped on the street and watched. •



# contact PARIS WARREN MILLER

## THE QUM-VIR JOURNALS OF BODO KAMMERKLIER

Editor's Note. It seems astonishing that so few Americans have heard of Bodo Kammerklier. Even those who can speak knowledgeably of Klatsch, Egon Furt, Döffer, and others even more obscure, have scarcely read him. More surprising still, perhaps, is the fact that Middle Eastern experts are not familiar with his work, which is a veritable treasure-trove of little-known facts about life as it is lived in that part of the world. True, he has never before been translated into English; but then, neither have Furt and Döffer.

Kammerklier, it should be said at the outset, has not been doomed to obscurity; he willed it, he chose it. He sought it as others seek fame. Even those bare facts of the sort usually available in a biographical dictionary are not readily come by in the case of Bodo Kammerklier. Because he served as a medical orderly in the First World War, which is one of the few verifiable facts we have of his life, we can assume that he was born in the 90's. Not long after his death, *Der Spiegel* devoted a page to an Homage aus Kammerklier; unfortunately, it revealed little not already known and offered much of a purely speculative nature.<sup>1</sup> An uncle was found who believed that Bodo was born in Düsseldorf; but, he added, significantly, "It is possible I am wrong in this." He thought it not unlikely that Bodo's family was, at the time of his birth, living in Prague, a city where for some years the elder Kammerklier pursued his business of dealing in horses.

In the late 20's, with the death of the Dada movement—Kammerklier is said to have participated in one of the Dadaist expositions; he is reported<sup>2</sup> to have constructed a sewing machine that cried and groaned when the treadle was worked—he left Berlin.

It is believed he went directly to Cairo where, apparently, he stayed for only a short time. At this point, however, we reach sure ground: the first entry in the Journals is dated 12 May 1932; he is in Qum-vir, and here he was to remain until his death in 1960.

Seta, the capital city, is known to us now as one of the most modern cities in the Middle East. When Bodo arrived, there were two buildings—one of them, Hosein's palace—and a village of tents.<sup>3</sup> There is no evidence of it in the Journals, I should say at once, but we know (young Hosein mentioned it while being interviewed at the Cannes Film Festival in 1961) that Kammerklier became an adviser to the king around 1934, possibly early 1935. The prince said, "Thank you. Actually, I learned my French from a German."<sup>4</sup>

Kammerklier, by his own wish, was cremated and his ashes scattered in the Qum-vir desert; no stone marks the site. Happily, it is not necessary; his Journals are his monument.

I should like to thank Suhrkampverlag of Munich for their kind permission in granting me the translation rights; and to express my gratitude to Profs. W. Herter Bestor and Norton Feuer for their aid in bringing into English the rich and complex prose of Bodo Kammerklier; they have given unstintingly of their time and knowledge; this translation would have been impossible without their help. Naturally, it goes without saying that any errors are my own. I should also like to thank my wife and Miss Ilsa Scharf who, with great skill, patience, and understanding, made an orderly typescript out of a chaos of notes.

W.M.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Unconfirmed.

<sup>3</sup> The oil deposits were not discovered until approximately 18 years after his arrival.

<sup>4</sup> *Paris-Match*; May, 1961.



## be an angel

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12 May 1932

*Arrival:* Arrived at last in Qum-vir, to Seta, the capital, a city that happens twice a year when the Bedouins come in with their goats from the grazing lands somewhere near Atlas. Now, this month, it is a city: black tents, rhomboidal, smelling of goats, have opened like umbrellas and spread over the flat land between Hosein's walled palace and the hills that mark the beginning of desert. Only one other permanent building: the Hotel Strandbad; ten rooms, built of baked mud and owned by a Swiss named Spiez. His wife is a doctor in the employ of Hosein; she lives in the palace, spends one night a week with her husband. There is one other European, an Austrian named Doppfle, a photographer who goes about loaded down like a drayhorse in a harness of camera straps. Spiez whispered, "He sleeps in them; I am sure of it." I do not yet know what Doppfle looks like; his face is always half hidden by a Leica.

Spiez suggests I act quickly and buy a girl before the Bedouins pitch tents. "You can give her back in six months if you are not satisfied; or for no reason at all but simply because you want to." He himself has two; he exchanges them every six months. They are self-perpetuating, he explained. He bought the original pair for five shirts; now he needs only a few yards of cheap cotton goods to effect a trade. This brings joy to his little Swiss soul, a wooden bird that shrills on the hour so happy it is at the thought of being dead. For Spiez, happiness would be total—he could draw under it the double lines of the bookkeeper—if only he could deposit the girls in a numbered account at the Zurich bank.

I submit that those who live off unearned income are pimps. Vision of bankers sending Deutschmark out on the streets, saying to a 100 Mark note, "Work hard, darling, and one day I will marry you." The marriage of men to money in a land where barter is the rule: Spiez copulates with shirts. He cannot face up to local custom and do it with goats. He practises buggery on yard goods. By choice. It is the mark of the Civilised Man: bestial, he yet has the hygienic sense.

I offered him five shirts for one of his girls.

"Which one?" he asked, his eyes sliding to the left.

"Either."

"Done!" he said; and the sweat of avarice then broke out on his face. The thought of profit congests his blood, tightens his sphincter, causes his right hand to tremble.

"I will give you Lila. She is twelve and very clean." He coughed; I expected it: his kind of passion produces phlegm, hoarseness; strange wheezes and rumbles emanate from them, as if another being inhabits them. Often I hear this trapped soul laboring for breath. "It is necessary in hot countries," Spiez said, confidential now, sharing with me, one European to another. "Fortunately, my wife is a doctor; she understands the need."

Spiez always smells a little of chemicals.

13 May

Lila wears bangles from wrist to elbow, both arms; and ankle bracelets. I will get accustomed to this; but in the beginning her embrace is the embrace of a knight. I could stand her in a niche and ignore her, but she has thighs that are thin, black and sleek. With her: it is as if the door to the Middle Ages has been opened just wide enough to allow me to squeeze through. She inhabits that time: walled cities and dirt; wild dogs and the memory of unicorns, dragons, two-headed beasts; banners; rasp-edged violence; the exercise of Rights. She has a soft down already on her lip.

14 May

*Reprise; Spiez in His Madness:* Took breakfast with Doppfle whose bandoliers of camera straps creaked like a farm cart as he bent to his food; x's of leather cross and recross his chest, reminding me of those African fetishes: those that have a nail, a thong, a bit of glass added whenever they have caused

## LA BODEGA

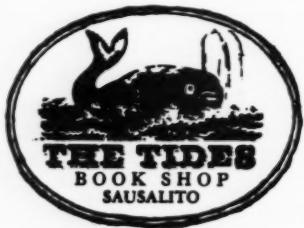


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another death. With each murder Doppfle takes on the burden of another camera; six, so far. He is a new kind of flagellant; penitence through consumption; he is buying his soul out of Purgatory by purchasing cameras. But he is not comfortable; he resists. He is constantly making adjustments, buckling and unbuckling the straps, raising and lowering the cameras, trying to distribute the weight evenly; something he has learned, perhaps, from watching the Bedouins load their camels. Surely he is trapped in his leather web. Spiez, I think, is right: Doppfle must sleep in it; he cannot get out of it anymore. He has the look of a knight grown fat in his armor; he can't get out, but has the satisfaction of knowing no one else can get in. It is all his! Surely it would be wrong to expect otherwise: animals do not remove their skins when they lie down to sleep.

But he resists. After photographing the bowl of raisins, a coffee stain on the tabletop, black-winged bug on the sugar cubes, he sighed; indication of a terrible weariness. He said, "Do you know what I wish? My most dear wish? — That I had a camera in my head; and that whenever I wanted to take a photo, all I would have to do is wink my eye. Like this." He winked at me. It was obscene; he will not be happy until he consists of replaceable parts. "This light! This magnificent light! It is irresistible!" he cried and brought the Leica up to his face. He photographed his coffee; drank it; left.

As he did so, Spiez appeared, materialising slowly as he walked through slotted beams of sunlight so powerful he was bleached to albino whiteness. He wore a black suit and a Homburg hat; I noted he was wearing one of the shirts I had given him in payment for Lila. Hand on back of Doppfle's empty chair, he bowed. "May I?" I signaled him to sit.

He removed the Homburg and placed it neatly on the table; it covered the coffee stain and rested in the dusty ambiance of a sunbeam that was like a bundle of rods; the hat became illuminated, acquired an aura. Spiez closed his eyes for a moment, prayerfully. His hat had become an object of reverence. "My dear colleague," he said. "It is our understanding, my dear colleague, that you wish to buy a woman?"

His sweat stained the stiff collar of my—his—shirt; in the silence he fidgeted and tried on various smiles: the conspirator's—full of secrets; the family solicitor's—gently reassuring; the hangman's—teeth hidden; the hysterics—tremulous. He wiped his face with a white handkerchief; in one corner there was a sticker of gold paper that said *Made in Switzerland Handrolled Edges*.

"I prefer to deal with principals only," he said. "I will take your word for it that you are not acting for another?"

I gave him my word. He does not need me to indulge him; a crack in the mud wall will do as well.

My voice seemed to give him enormous pleasure, and relief; his smile turned genuine and he touched his hair gently with the palm of his hand. He said, "I sometimes think, dear colleague, that we businessmen are the only truly Good Men left in the world. Think of it, sir: whatever there is that is good in our lives—who provides it if not the businessman?" He removed a sheaf of papers from his breast pocket, put on steel-rimmed glasses, cast his eyes up and down the sheets: lists of some sort. "There is no question of your credit rating," he said, "please understand, dear colleague, no question whatsoever. But there are forms, eh? We might even say that there is a form, right? Yes?" He broke off and his gaze went inward; his voice trembled: "What happiness it gives me to bring joy to another, dear colleague; to put my Homburg on the table as a signal of my good intentions. Oh, God, grant me sainthood and eternal life!" He looked up under his eyebrows, slyly. "Our preliminary correspondence establishes the terms," he said, his voice gone suddenly hard and harsh, as if he had just been denied some reasonable request. "Due dates, bills of lading, delivery routes, crating charges, export-import duties, port taxes, declarations, engineering reports, specifications, bribing of border guards, cunningly chosen gifts for the wife of the minister, surcharge for nepotism, connivance with bank managers for exchange into guilders, surtax stamps in Amsterdam, brothels in Buenos Aires, mounted

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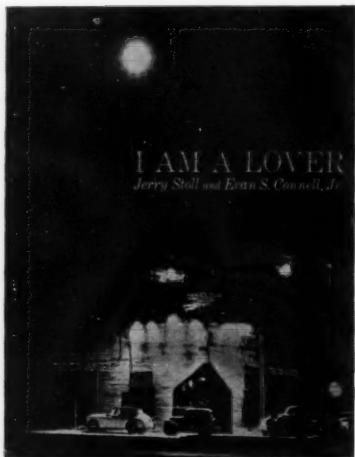


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# Rapidly becoming something...



"Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns and marked their ways upon the ancient deep?" runs the quote from Edwin Markham beneath a photograph by Jerry Stoll, one of a magnificent group in a new album of pictures called *I Am a Lover* (Angel Island Publications, Inc., San Francisco, \$2.95). With short, often tender, always pertinent quotations chosen by Evan S. Connell this new photo album stands firm in Edward Steichen's *Family of Man* tradition. Yet there is a difference. Steichen's famed collection attained universality by a conscious dispersal of the subject matter; Jerry Stoll achieves his universality by restricting the milieu of his pictures to one small area of San Francisco around Telegraph Hill. Here we meet children, dungareed teenagers, Bohemians, Beats, dancers, painters, poets, lovers—above all lovers, lovers huddled on steps in

butterflies, shellacking of beetles for brooches, conversion to bullion. The paperwork has kept us busy for weeks. Trouble in the Argentine is to be expected. Losses in Rio. Five shirts, my dear colleague. Only the notary's stamps remains to be affixed."

I went to my room and brought him five more shirts. Seeing them, he covered his mouth with his hand in a quick, convulsive movement, as if he were overcome by a sudden nausea, or to stifle a scream. His eyes, first, were angry; then suspicious. Now he thinks I am the mad one because I have paid him twice for Lila. He no longer wears my shirts and looks martyred whenever he sees me.

4 June

*Doppfle's Christmas:* A crate arrived today for Doppfle; he himself supervised its unloading from the dirty boat with triangular sails that somehow makes its way across the Persian Gulf once a month. Two men in flapping sheets carried it up to the hotel and Doppfle fell on it, yet ripped open the lid with infinite care and removed the excelsior as if it were the organs of his beloved. With each prize revealed, he cried out—the cry of pain and triumph, the cry of a successful animal. The crate contained a telephoto lens, a microphoto lens, a little machine for registering light, a shade to keep sun out of the lens, the latest model Leica, hundreds of feet of film, and a new leather case for carrying these things. Doppfle filled the case and hung it on his shoulder; immediately it became a part of him, it seemed to have been there always, and the new strap across his chest was indistinguishable from the others. Balance now is impossible for him; he leans a little to the right.

This afternoon at tea Doppfle produced from his new case, an item I had not seen him unpack. It has a sinister import, I am certain; also, Doppfle must be aware of this, for his hand trembled when he held it. In appearance it is almost identical with an ear syringe. Doppfle uses it to blow dust from his lenses; under the pressure of his fingers and palm it snorts like an overworked little animal. "You see, cloth would scratch the lenses," he explains. But in his heart he knows he uses the syringe to preserve breath; he has purchased this miniature bellows as a replacement for his wornout lungs; it is like the auxiliary engine bought by a nervous boat-owner and kept in a little wooden shed like a pampered watchdog. Veteran watcher at so many deathbeds, I know that Doppfle's body cannot bear much longer the demands he puts on it. I look at him and say to myself: It is time he was put out to graze.

Tonight he showed me one of the new lenses; held it cupped in his palm; offered me a glimpse of it as if he were a peddler of state secrets. "So fast," he said, "this lens is so fast that we do not even need light anymore."

6 June

I am using Lila harder now—result of the knowledge I have paid for her twice.

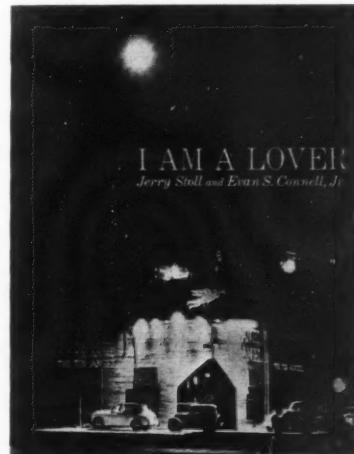
10 June

*Remorse:* When I cannot sleep, Lila sings to me. Last night, overcome with remorse (10 shirts), I sang to her. She would not sleep until I stopped singing. Doppfle complained to Spiez about the noise. I heard him say, "It's hard enough!" Doppfle has still not purchased a woman. Lila's people leave tomorrow for the mountains. Now I must stay here.

15 June

*Doppfle's Agony:* It is not difficult to imagine it: in his room, alone, at night, trying to extricate himself from the harness. He is like a man trapped in a Chinese puzzle; he says to himself: Once I get out of this I will be amazed at how simple it was! He stands before the mirror, looks over his shoulder at the maze of straps crossing his back, tries to translate left into right, right into left. Confused by his own image, his arms tired, the web more tangled than when he had started, exhausted, he falls onto the bed, the cameras about him

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like amulets. Through half the night he shifts and turns, going through his catalog of adjustments, attempting to fit into the hollows of his body his intractable organs. Doppfle carried his nails with him; more of a man than Indian fakirs, Doppfle could lie on down and make it an agony. Slowly, as breath was trapped tighter in his throat, his face turned purple; like the dawns here, the color must have grown in intensity, from palest lilac. The syringe failed to take over. He was found in the morning by a servant who looked at his face and thought she saw daybreak twice-over that day. One eye was closed: to the very end he was taking pictures; the camera in his head clicking away, a clock that would stop only for time itself. Caught there in his brain under the thickened blood's developer must be a hundred, a thousand, snapshots of ceiling, walls, the narrow window, edge of blanket, towel on its hook, brass bars at the foot of his bed, his narrow feet.

Spiez in the black suit and Homburg again. He had to cut the camera straps, all flaked and feathery at their edges. Homburg on the table, Spiez drew up a death certificate to send to the nearest of kin. "Accidental death"; that was his finding. It is an unctuous verdict; they always are. I signed as Witness.

We buried him the same day, wrapped in a frayed tablecloth, trussed once again.

Spiez sent to the family the death certificate, condolences, and a bill for services. "What about the cameras?" I asked. Spiez bowed his head. "Doppfle would have wanted it that way," he said.

True. Spiez will carry on the work; no doubt of it. He is the heir apparent, and more than willing; his whole life he has been in training for the job.

20 June

*Gioia!* Lila is so innocent that when I need the knowledge of her corruption I have to remind myself that she is twelve years old. When I say to myself: *But she is a child!*—then am I overcome by desire, reach out for her embrace, her museum odor, and take her on my lap. How fraudulent my passion is. Among us, only rapists know real desire. Lying beside her I think of Mamlock's madman in his cell, repeating over and over the one word: *Gioia*. Only the mad are happy in Europe. *Gioia, gioia, gioia*, I say to Lila, giving her, one by one, my fingers to bite.

22 June

*Dialog:*

SPIEZ: That's a lot of sand out there. My God, but what a lot of sand!  
MYSELF: Yes.  
SPIEZ: Have you ever seen so much sand?  
MYSELF: No.  
SPIEZ: Neither have I. What can it mean?  
MYSELF: The sand?  
SPIEZ: Yes.  
MYSELF: I don't know.  
SPIEZ: Neither do I. But it must mean something; there is so much of it.

25 June

*Oum-vir Fable (Told by Lila):* Before the All Wise put man on earth there were many rumors of his coming. The animals, and the birds and fish as well, talked about it endlessly, speculating. They said, "Yes, I have it on good authority that he will turn up next week," or, "Well, it won't be long now," or, "In any case, it's going to be very interesting to see what form it takes."

One day then, not many weeks before man made his appearance, a mouse and an oyster were having a little conversation in the beneficent shade of a tree. The mouse was preening himself: he licked down his fur, curled his tail into cunning and appealing lines, sweetened his breath with carefully selected grasses. And he said to the oyster, "I tell you, I'm looking forward with a delight so great I will not even try to conceal it from you, my dear. For after

semi-darkness, lovers in bars, restaurants, lovers intimately at home, or standing melancholy and estranged at the corner of Grand and Green. Jerry Stoll has an extraordinary and enviable gift of reflecting that spark of goodness which lies, often hidden, in everything. He catches the "oneness," the inter-connectedness of everything from a jazz musician to a rainy day, from the violent night-street encounter of man and woman, "I am a lover and have not found my thing to love" to the poignant picture of a girl alone in a crowd, "Cannot the heart, in the midst of crowds, feel frighteningly alone?"

*I Am a Lover* is happily and beautifully unique. Jerry Stoll is the champion of the misunderstood, the troubador of lovers, the true artist able to transform the dross into gold with the magic of love. He sees straight to the heart. *Mexico City News*

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all, let's face it, my dear, I am so pretty, so made for petting, so lovable—these men are bound to find me utterly irresistible. They will pet and pamper me, feed me delicacies, fatten me. And finally, when my happiness has passed beyond the limit of bearing, they will eat me. Oh, my dear, how they will enjoy and savor my sweet flesh and lick my bones. I tell you it will bring tears to their eyes. I see myself already as the prize, the joy, the staple, the luxury, the necessity."

So taken was the mouse with his image of the future that only now did he pay heed to the oyster, who was crying bitterly. "But why are you crying, my dear?" he said.

He put his arm around the oyster, but that one was inconsolable and could not, for the moment, speak.

"But do tell me," said the mouse. "Was it anything *I* said?"

"No, no," the oyster said, finally gaining control of its emotions, "no, my dear, it was only a momentary weakness, forgive me—a sadness of soul at the thought that these men will never want to eat me. I am so ugly, tasteless, and unappealing."

"Poor oyster," the mouse said.

CONTACT  
FUTURES

PETER EDLER/THE ARBITRIUM  
continues

DO ME A FAVOR

Novelette by Edward Pomerantz

KENNETH LAMOTT

takes a  
close look into the murky  
depths of

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New Short Stories by

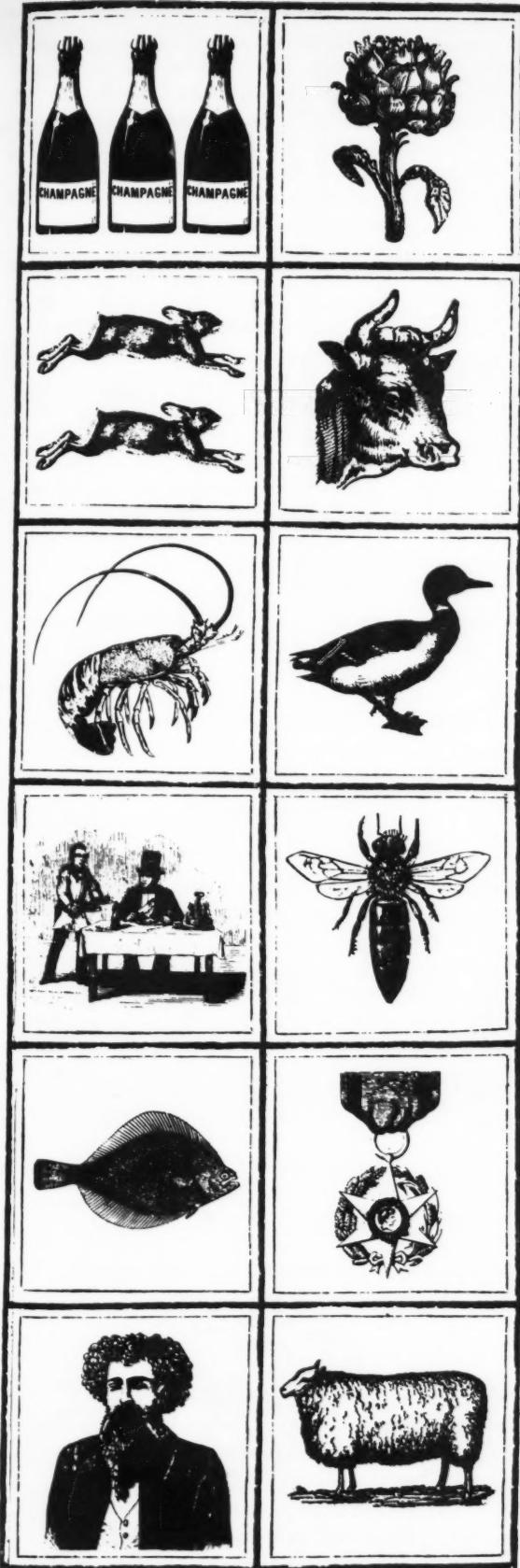
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drawings, poetry, photographs

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NOTES FROM A BOTTLE

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# THE ARTISTS' & WRITERS' COOKBOOK

## JEAN HELION — 3 RECIPES

### SOUP OVER A WOOD FIRE

This simple soup from Normandy is to be cooked over a wood fire in a *marmite de fonte* (a cast iron pot with a tight-fitting lid and, often, legs) in an open fireplace.

Cut leeks into sections, one leek for every serving of soup you want, cutting the white part into pieces about an inch long, the green part into smaller pieces because they are tougher and take longer to cook. Then cut a large potato per serving into one-inch pieces. Put the potato and leek into salted water, measuring about a cup of water per person, and *nothing else*.

Boil for an hour and a half, slowly, covered. Then open the lid so that smoke from the wood fire will come into the soup. Cook this way for another half hour.

Serve in large flat bowls over slices of French bread that have been generously covered with thick cream.

### SPIDER CRAB AND CHICKEN SOUP

A whole spider crab and a cleaned chicken are boiled together with two carrots, a whole cabbage, an onion, a bunch of thyme and a leaf of laurel. Sometime between 45 minutes and an hour and 15 minutes—just before the crab and chicken are tender enough to break apart easily—add fresh mint leaves. The soup is served over toasted bread rubbed with garlic. If cooked over a fireplace fire, the soup can be smoked for the last half hour of cooking.

### LONG ISLAND DUCK STUFFED WITH FRESH CLAMS

FIRST LIGHTLY FRY the clams in some of the duck fat with salt and pepper. Stuff the duck with the clams together with herbs such as fennel and chopped watercress, and close the opening of the cavity with bread dipped in white wine.

Bake the duck, sprinkling it first with salt and pepper. When it is almost done, rub flowers of fennel into the skin and return to the oven until tender.

*The French painter Jean Hélion is in the rather unusual position of seeing ten years of his past before him this month (July) as the distinguished Louis Carré Gallery in Paris exhibits his work from 1929 to 1939. It is particularly noteworthy, as Hélion's work today is very different. His paintings of the '30s are bold, highly finished Leger-like abstractions, and during this time Hélion was considered one of the leaders of the abstract movement of the generation after Picasso. Now, after the war and his own terrible experiences as a soldier and a prisoner of war (he*

wrote a book, "They Shall Not Have Me," about his daring escape from a German labor camp) he quietly celebrates the commonplace. He paints loaves of bread, pumpkins, park benches, trees, plows, men at leisure—all realistically. His studio, built on the flat roof of an apartment building high over the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, is crowded with canvases depicting the things he lives among. Hélion was born in 1904 in a small town in Normandy, and lived in the United States during periods both before and after the war.

These recipes are from the proposed second volume of *The Artists' and Writers' Cookbook*. The first volume, edited by Beryl Barr and Barbara Sachs, is available now, \$10.00, deluxe gift edition, at your bookstore or direct from CONTACT EDITIONS, Sausalito, California (California residents add 4% sales tax please).

## contact LETTERS

(continued from page 6)

and ready to fire. I have never been able to bear insolence, especially of the kind that attacks my fiscal integrity. I abhor being thought cheap.

No sooner did I see CONTACT than I knew that close at hand was both the satisfaction of the curiosity I'd felt ever since Sandy had shown me a letter from you mentioning its (then) imminent transmogrification—and also a chance once and for all to expiate myself in the eyes of this misanthropic newsdealer from whom I had purchased nothing since the chilly afternoon in February of 1961 when, in one transaction, I became the possessor of both that day's edition of the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* and *The New Yorker*. As I handed him his dollar he asked:

"What's in it? I sold five now. Somebody said it's got the best writers."

"Oh, the best," I answered. "Look, this man here," I said, "is not only one of the most talented writers in the country, but he's one of the chief editors of it, too." (I had by then forgotten all about Miss Vasilades and her squalid employment.)

As I walked away, the man ducked beneath the low roof of the kiosk and said to a woman seated inside: "Five of them I sold already."

What can I say? Old wine in a new bottle? Ryan is too much of a money-man? The PARIS REVIEW ought to stay put? Of course, I know that the novel *A* (not *The*) *View From the Fortieth Floor* was written by Theodore H. White, not E. B. White (page 22, left-hand column, line 21), but I know equally well that accuracy, when introduced into incoherence, can be as serious a lapse as a fart at the Court of St. James. (Query: Why does Henry Wolf say that Ridgewood is in Queens and that Milton Glaser is a friend of his when both statements are true?)

Misspellings? *Passim*. I was amused at the Holmes

piece: *The Ur-Beatnik as Young Fogey*. No, really. It was good. Also the coyote and cow story, and the photos of the mannequins with pins in their eyes and hung upside down like Benito Mussolini and Clara Petacci.

The Barthelme piece. I can do it too, if that's what you want. 2,2,4-tri-methyl pentane but now we fly by jet. Dr. Faustus trepanned the washboard cranium of H. Miller's Brodsky but the screw slipped and he went out the window. Authentic case in medical journal. Leading. I said to the lady on my left Eine Kleine Nacht-musik gives me the hives and my young lovely bride on my left, no, right, answered well I should think so after all that gunk you've been swallowing. Headline: HEAVY-SIDE LAYER TO BE LIGHTENED BY SODIUM BICARBONATE. Forceps, please. Puh-lease! There! Die verstehende Psychologie und damit auch jede aufdeckende Methode in der Psychotherapie müssen sich innerhalb verständlicher psychologischer Zusammenhänge bewegen. Diese Zusammenhänge müssen sich aufbauen auf der psychologischen Wirklichkeit, d.h. auf dem, was der Einzelne, ob gesund oder krank, tatsächlich erlebt oder imstand ist zu erleben. The residue remaining at any time,  $T_1$ , of an amount,  $Q$ , of a radioactive decomposing material, such as radium is given by:  $Q = e^{-T}$ , where  $e$  is the transfinite number 2.713..., the base of the system of "natural" logarithms (Non-Napierian). Better way:  $\log T = Q$ . Mon ouvrage de la longue haleine. Was the inability to achieve orgasm at that crucial Time one of the Virgin's Seven Dolors? The Scene: The famous round table at the Algonquin Hotel in Manhattan. The Cast: EDNA FERBER, NOEL COWARD and supernumeraries. The curtain rises.

NOEL

It just struck me Edna—you resemble a man, rather.

EDNA FERBER

So do you.

(Curtain)

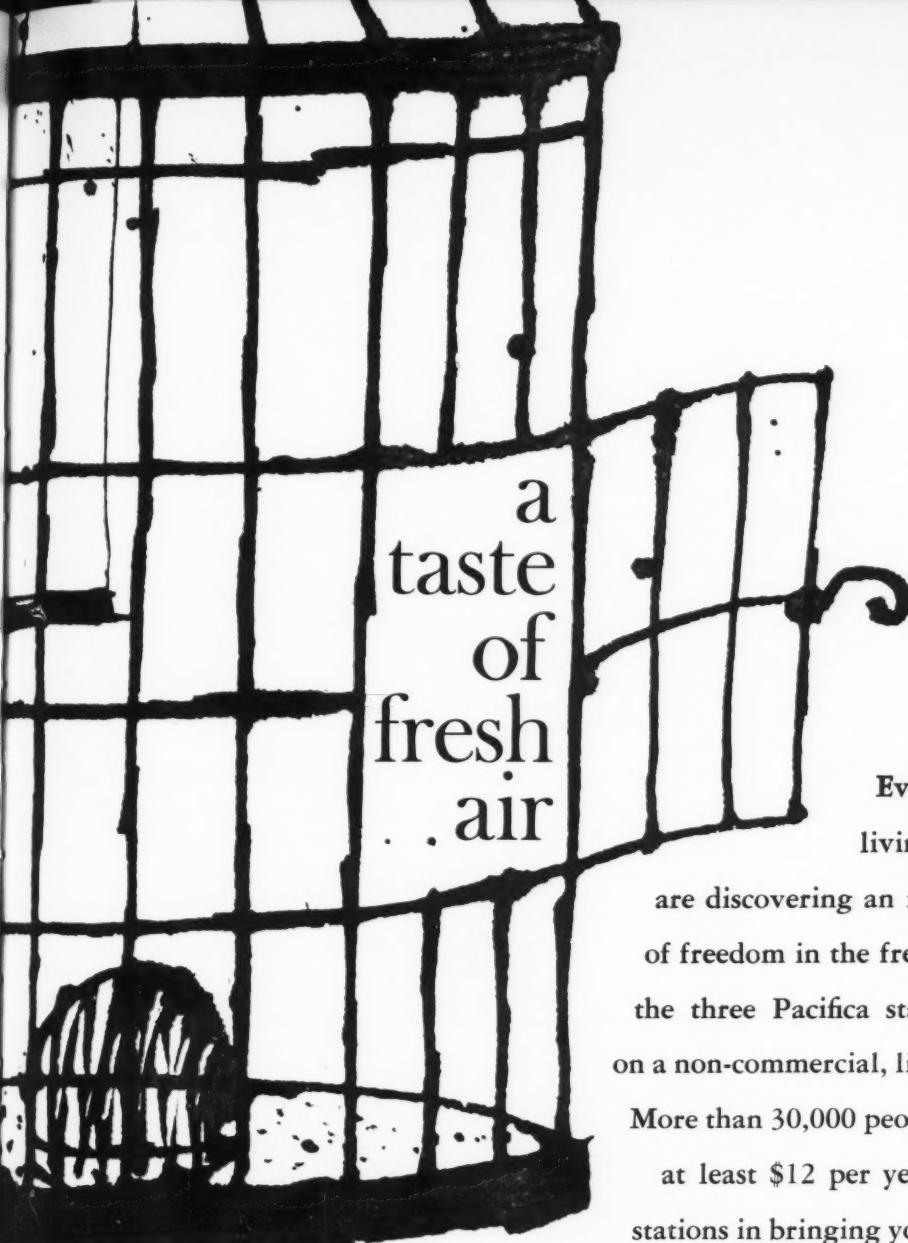
Here's the key to my pad, Doll. Meet me there at seven. If I'm not on time, start without me. Aber wenn ich manchmal den Schlüssel sind und ganz in mich selbst hinuntersteige, da wo im dunkeln Spiegel zu neigen und sehe mein eigenes Bild, das nun ganz Ihn gleicht, meinem Freund und Führer.

As ever,

John Rockwell  
New York City



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HAROLD WITT received the Phelan Award for narrative poetry in 1960. He has been published in *Hudson Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Saturday Review* and others. *Beasts In Clothes*, his latest book, was published last year by Macmillan Company.

CALVIN KENTFIELD was one of the founding editors of *Contact*. He is the author of *The Alchemist's Voyage*, a novel, *The Angel and the Sailor*, a book of short stories, and *All Men Are Mariners*, a new novel which will be published this fall by McGraw-Hill. The story in this issue is an excerpt from that book.

HUGH HOOD is a Canadian writer who lives in Montreal with his wife and three children. His stories have appeared in magazines in Canada, the United States, and Europe. A collection, *Flying a Red Kite and Other Stories*, will be published this fall by Ryerson Press in Toronto.

LEONARD WOLF is a Rumanian-born American poet who has lately turned to writing fiction and drama as well. His poems have appeared in *Atlantic*, *Yale Review*, *Hudson Review*, and elsewhere. He is now teaching at San Francisco State College.

KENNETH LAMOTT was born in Tokyo, where his father was teaching in a college. He went to Yale, was a Navy language officer during the war, and later worked in Washington as information officer for the Far Eastern Commission. He and his wife, as he says, decided to ditch the official life in 1951 and moved to Tiburon, California. He is the author of three books and has had articles and short stories published by *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Holiday*, and the *Yale Review*, among others.

NANCY WESTLAKE (portrait by John Fairbanks) was born in 1930. Her education is, she states, "in progress."

PHILIP LEVINE won the Joseph Henry Jackson award in 1961. He has been publishing poetry since 1955 in *Poetry*, *Paris Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Commentary*, *Western Review*, *Antioch Review*, and *Saturday Evening Post* in their special "People on the Way Up To Electric Shock Therapy" feature.

ROBERT AMFT is a widely known Chicago painter who has won many prizes and awards.

FRANK CHIN was born in Berkeley in 1940 and raised during the war years by a former vaudeville acrobat and a former silent-film actress. He attended the University of California at Berkeley, where he was an editor of *The Pelican*, the campus humor magazine. "Food for All His Dead" is his first published story. He is currently at work on a novel under contract with Atheneum Publishers and is attending that University of Iowa on a fellowship.

TED WIMMER lives on a small farm in Novato. This is his first publication.

SIDNEY PETERSON started out to become a sculptor, then went to sea for several years, changed his mind again and studied medicine at the University of California for three years, after which he went to work for a newspaper. He founded a film company in Seattle, spent two years with the Museum of Modern Art as a television director and writer, founded *Workshop 20*, and ultimately went to Hollywood where he wrote cartoon scenarios for UPA and Walt Disney. He is the author of two novels, one (unpublished) on the religious life of a lunatic, and *A Fly in the Pigment*, published 1961 by Contact Editions.

KENNETH REXROTH is Kenneth Rexroth.

THEODORE HOLMES taught English at Harvard this year and will be at Oxford on a Fulbright next year. He has been published in such magazines as *Partisan Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *Chelsea Perspectives*, *Etc.*, and a book of Scribner's, *Poets of Today*, Series #10 in 1958. He was a *Kenyon Review* Fellow in *Poetry* in 1958.

DANIEL MCKINLEY is a teacher of biology at Lake Erie College, Painesville, Ohio. His chief professional interest is in ecology and the relationships between man and nature. His writings include papers on several vanished birds and mammals in Missouri. He is currently at work on a monograph on the extinct Carolina parakeet.



FRANK CHIN



KENNETH LAMOTT



SIDNEY PETERSON



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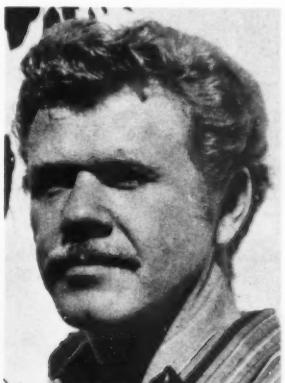
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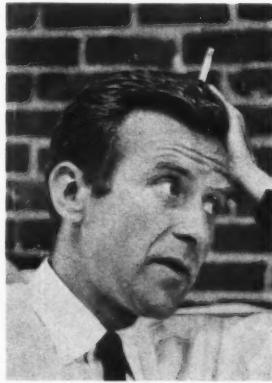
HAROLD WITT

# contact

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## CONTRIBUTORS

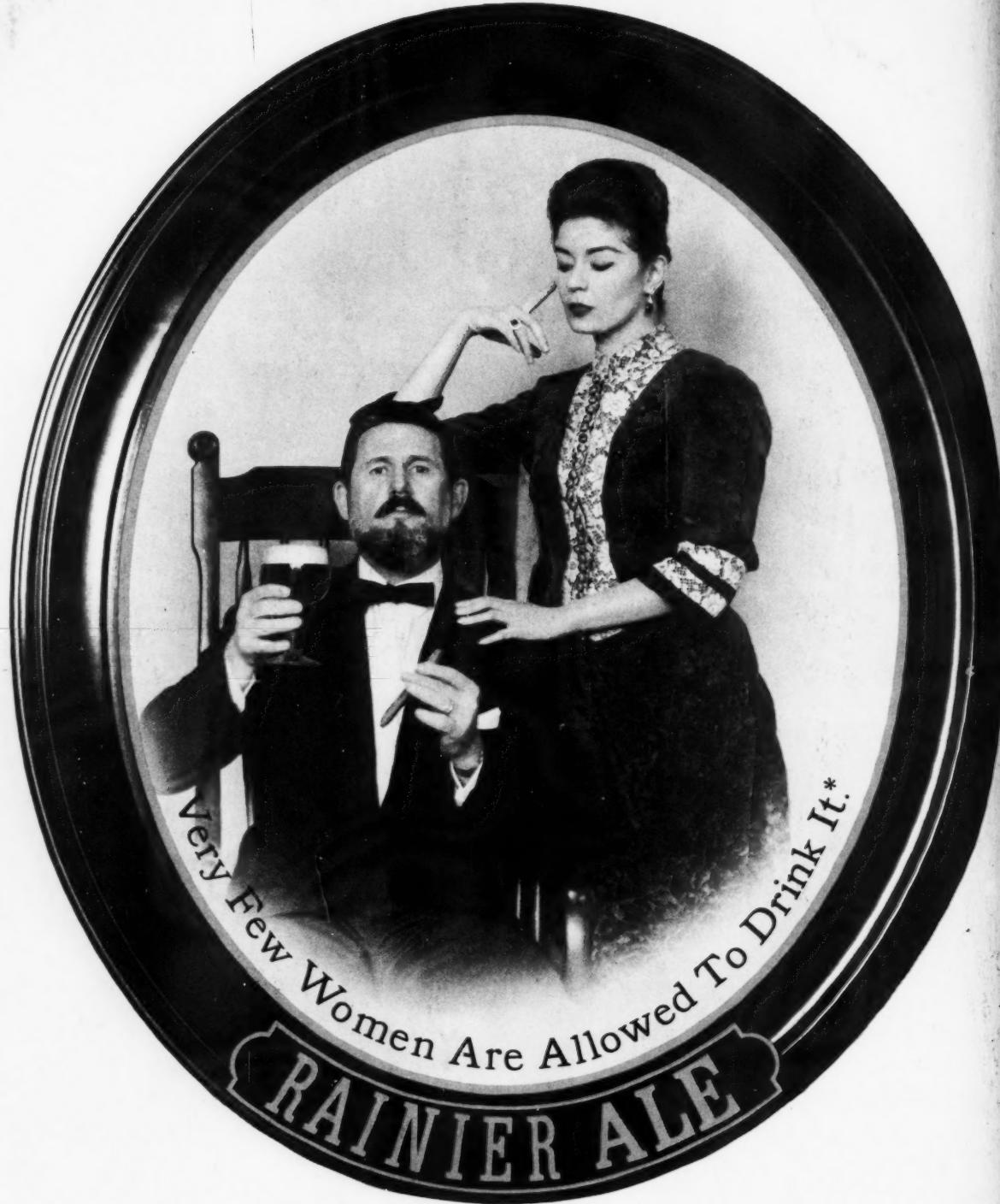
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NICOLAS SIDJAKOV



LEONARD WOLF



\* A male well-wisher recently said he was much stimulated by our ads, but admitted he hadn't bought Our Product because he didn't "much care for American ales and beers; too pallid." Poor fellow! He didn't know that Rainier Ale is quite different from any other ale in this country. For one thing, it is much more, ah, *robust* (nearly twice as) than other ales. And it is far more colorful: it has a good male color and a good male flavor. This may be why women — although they apparently admire Our Product — don't really go for it. Which is as it should be.

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